farmer's weekly

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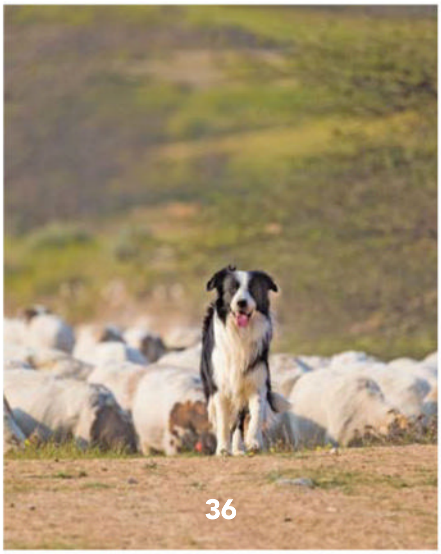

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Bird flu needs a unified approach

At the end of June, more than 1,8 million layer hens were slaughtered in Delmas in Mpumalanga, due to an outbreak of the H7 highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza.

Over the past two years, bird flu has been spreading rampantly around the world. In France, for example, 10 million birds were slaughtered over the past season to curb the spread of the disease. In the US, more than 50 million birds have been culled or have died from infection. Japan recently banned imports of poultry from Brazil. As one of Brazil's biggest markets for poultry, it is unclear what kind of impact this ban will ultimately have on Brazil's poultry industry. Brazil has reported 50 outbreaks across the country. It was unclear how many birds had thus far been culled.

Bird flu is difficult to control and predict, as it is largely spread by wild birds. While many commercial broilers and layers are kept in chicken houses, the virus spreads easily, and can be transmitted via fomites. This means that people can transmit the virus to healthy birds. Once one bird is infected, the infection spreads quickly throughout the flock.

This, of course, emphasises the importance of biosecurity on a farm. Farmers are advised to keep chickens indoors where possible, and to limit people's contact with their poultry.

Of particular interest is the supposed sudden spike in the spread of bird flu cases. According to a study by researchers at St Jude Children's Research Hospital in the US, the current H5N1 bird flu virus gained new genes and greater virulence from infected wild birds as it spread west across North America. With increased virulence comes increased transmission. And, of course, infection works both ways, with migratory birds taking the mutated virus to other regions of the world.

We have seen the impact of avian influenza outbreaks in other countries on poultry-derived products, with egg prices in the US, for example, skyrocketing primarily as a result of a lack of supply, due to the culling of birds infected with bird flu. While we have not seen this impact on South African poultry products, if the outbreaks continue uncontrolled and more birds are culled, it is very likely that we may see an increase in the price of eggs and chicken. This would be devastating for local consumers, as poultry products remain some of the most affordable forms of protein on the market.

The world's bird flu problem is difficult to control and predict, and highlights the importance of co-operation between countries when it comes to agriculture. Farmers should, and do, take responsibility for the biosecurity of their own farms. But as bird flu is spread by wild birds, greater co-ordination between countries is needed. As happened with the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, it is important for countries to work together to track and control bird flu outbreaks. This is not to suggest that the same COVID-19 strategies are followed, but rather that greater co-operation between interested nations, especially along migratory bird routes, could serve farmers and consumers alike. Bird flu cannot be eradicated, but I do believe that it can be adequately controlled in this manner. FW

Janine Ryan, Editor

farmer's weekly

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PRODUCTS THAT WORK FROM PEOPLE WHO CARE

Shared river basins could lead to conflict, says new study

Sophie de Bruin, a researcher in environmental change at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, writes that 920 million people could face conflict over the world's rivers by 2050.

The views expressed in our weekly opinion piece do not necessarily reflect those of *Farmer's Weekly*.

This is an edited version of an article first published by The Conversation. Read the original article at shorturl.at/aouBE.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project on the Nile River started operating in February 2022. It reinforced tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, the three countries relying most heavily on the Nile's water. Sudan and Egypt consider the US$4,6 billion (R85 billion) dam a threat to vital water supplies; Ethiopia sees it as essential to its development.

This is just one example of how conflicts can arise between states that share river basins. And there is a real risk that such conflicts will become more common as global temperatures rise.

Hundreds of rivers are shared between two or more countries. Sharing waters can be a source of co-operation or conflict. This depends on economic, cultural and institutional conditions. It also depends on historical relations between countries.

Although co-operation historically prevails over conflict, and large-scale violent international conflicts have not happened so far, tensions over water have long existed. They are also rising in several river basins.

Africa has 66 transboundary river basins. These include the Nile basin and the Juba–Shebelle and Lake Turkana basins in the Horn of Africa. Conflict risk can rise as populations grow, water-use intensifies and the climate changes.

There is no consensus on the precise mechanisms that fuel conflict in such basins. It is, however, possible to identify basins where risks are projected to compound. This can be done by combining data on conflict risk conditions identified in existing literature.

In a recent study I conducted with three water system researchers from IHE Delft, Utrecht University and Wageningen University & Research, we came up with three possible futures regarding conflict risk in global transboundary river basins.

Our study projects that if nothing substantially changes in how transboundary river basins are managed, and with climate change worsening, 920 million people will live in very high to high conflict-risk basins by 2050. If nations improve water use, strengthen co-operation and do more to prevent or mitigate conflict, this number drops to 536 million. Water treaties and strong river basin organisations increase the likelihood of long-term, stable co-operation between states.

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT RISK

Our study combined projections on the construction of mega-dams and institutional resilience. It looked at hydroclimatic, governance and socio-economic risk factors. Combining these factors provided an idea of the overall conflict risk per transboundary river basin.

We used a broad interpretation of conflict over transboundary water resources. This ranged from accusations and diplomatic tensions to economic sanctions and violent disputes.

WATER TREATIES WILL INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF STATES CO-OPERATING

A lack of co-operation between countries can lead to a loss of benefits that could arise from joint activities. These include adapting to climate change, protecting the environment, and developing socio-economically. Tensions between states over such issues can also spill over into other sectors, compromising regional political or economic relations.

FINDINGS PREDICT CONFLICT

Our results show that under a business-as-usual scenario (no major changes made), 920 million people out of the 4,4 billion people living in transboundary river basins will live in very high to high conflict-risk basins by 2050. In Africa, this number includes people living in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. It also includes those in Mozambique, Malawi, Benin and Togo.

In the high-ambition scenario, which implies improved water-use practices and rising institutional resilience, this number decreases to 536 million. The low-ambition scenario implies some improvement in water-use efficiency, institutional capacity and governance quality. Under this scenario, 724 million people would be living in very high to high conflict-risk basins by 2050.

Basins in Africa and Asia especially are projected to face high overall risks, since several risks collide here. In Africa, several basins face extra risks such as high variability of water flows and limited water availability. There is also a dependence of downstream countries on upstream ones.

The current tensions in the Nile over Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam, for instance, could escalate when Ethiopia decides to develop several new mega-hydropower dams. Egypt and, to a lesser extent, Sudan are highly dependent on basin-related water resources.

WHAT IT MEANS

Our study shows that potentially, 11 more large hydropower dams could be built in the Nile basin. This is based on physical feasibility, energy yield and construction costs. The projection takes into account some restrictions, such as protected natural reserves.

Seven of these dams would be in Ethiopia, and the other four would be in South Sudan. The construction of these dams would be taking place alongside rising water shortages, high water dependencies and limited economic resources to deal with water-related risks.

These new dams could worsen regional climate change impacts and water demands, especially when the population and economy are both growing. Although scholars cannot predict when this will occur, a multi-year drought in the Nile Basin is inevitable. This would have severe impacts on water allocation.

The prospect of a multi-year drought in parts of the Nile Basin requires preparations today. And even if the impact of new dams is moderate, the perception of risk could affect how states make decisions over shared river co-operation.

Two other large basins (the Juba-Shebelle in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, and the Lake Turkana basin in Kenya and Ethiopia) are projected to face high conflict risk levels. In these two basins, multiple issues, such as local conflict, low human development and limited water availability, already collide. This may be worsened without additional efforts towards 2050 due to relatively high population growth and climate change impacts, and without sufficient resources to adapt.

Even in our high ambition scenario, which implies substantial improvements in water management, overall domestic governance and institutional resilience, the Juba-Shebelle and Lake Turkana basins still face high risks. The challenges and risks these basins face must be included in plans. And when large hydropower dams are built, their operation must not hinder the climate adaptation goals of the wider region.

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26 TO 28 JULY
Carbon Neutral Farming, Soil Conservation & New Technologies Conference, Holiday Inn Hotel, Sandton. Email Cindy Dlamini at cindy@mathema.co.za.

28 TO 30 JULY
Cannabis Expo, The Globe Suncoast, Durban. Email info@TheCannabisExpo.co.za.

COURSES AND TRAINING

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22 JULY
Beehive Removal Course, Pretoria. Email Bhive at info@bhive.co.za.

24 TO 28 JULY
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26 JULY
Profitable Boer Goat Production, Potchefstroom. Email Johan Steyn at info@boergoats.co.za, or visit boergoats.co.za.

31 JULY TO 4 AUGUST
Advanced Sheep and Goats Artificial Insemination, George. Email Rothman Livestock Training Services at office@RLTSafrica.com.

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IMPORTANT DATES

13 TO 16 SEPTEMBER
Nampo Cape, Bredasdorp. Visit grainsa.co.za/pages/nampo-cpt/cpt-home.

18 TO 21 SEPTEMBER
Macadamia Symposium, Zimbali Coastal Resort. Email IMS2023@samac.org.za.

12 TO 14 OCTOBER
Nampo Alfa, Nampo Park, Bothaville. Visit nampoalfa.co.za.

Entries should be submitted at least one month in advance. Email Janine Ryan at janiner@caxton.co.za to place an entry. Please note that, due to limited space, publication of an event cannot be guaranteed. All entries are published at the editor's discretion.

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Help cook a pot of soup for Mandela Day

Chefs with Compassion calls on the hearts and hands of all South Africans this Mandela Day to create a monumental wave of compassion and nourishment. Since the life-changing year of 2020, 18 July has become a beacon of unity and care, manifesting in a huge annual food preparation collaboration by chefs, home cooks, hotels, restaurants, culinary schools, corporates and community caterers: the #67000litres for Mandela Day Challenge.

"This initiative stands as a testament to our shared humanity, bringing together home cooks, caring corporates, and community caterers to combat the twin demons of food waste and hunger. An astonishing 970 844 meals have been created and donated in Madiba's honour since the inception of the #67000litres Challenge," says Chef James Khoza, chairperson of Chefs with Compassion and president of the South African Chefs' Association.

Chefs with Compassion is appealing to the culinary skill within every South African home cook. The challenge? Chef Coo Pillay, national project co-ordinator of Chefs with Compassion explains: "We're challenging everyone everywhere to prepare a wholesome 10ℓ of soup within 67 minutes (or more if you'd prefer) any time over the weekend of Mandela Day from Saturday 15 July to Tuesday 18 July, and donate it to a beneficiary of your choice. It's a chance to touch lives across the nation on Mandela Day. Registration is via Quicket with a participation fee of R67.

"We are also inviting Corporates to 'Back A Kitchen' with a donation of R6,70 per litre, contributing to this ocean of soup and compassion. You'll receive a Section 18A certificate and a unique opportunity for your team (up to 10 people) to cook with professional chefs for 67 minutes. To 'Back a Kitchen', please contact us on info@cwc.org.za."

The target of serving over 67 000ℓ of nourishing soup means that more than 260 000 people across South Africa will receive a warm meal on Mandela Day in a tangible example of shared humanity and compassion.

Chef James continues: "By joining the #67000litres challenge, you are voicing a powerful message – that the food wasted at every stage of the food chain could, and should, be transformed into meals for every hungry South African. This Mandela Day, let's unite to demonstrate how compassion and collective action can change lives and touch hearts."

Donations made by corporates and the public for the #67000litres Challenge will enable Chefs with Compassion to continue their mission to Rescue/Cook/Feed, transforming potential food waste into wholesome meals, not just on Mandela Day, but every day. To date, Chefs with Compassion has rescued over 1,54 million kilograms of food from ending up in landfills and served over 5,26 million meals.

Register on Quicket, pick up your spoons and pots, and pour love into every stir as you prepare a delicious, nutritious soup for those who need it the most. Join the #67000litres Challenge this Mandela Day, and let's prove that, together, we can fill every bowl with hope and nourishment.

For more information, visit cwc.org.za, email info@cwc.org.za, or register as a home cook on Quicket at qkt.io/67000litres.

Thank you!

I just read a short and straight-to-the-point article by Peter Hughes on how we should be prepared for the possible worst to come (see *FW*, 16 June).

This message hits directly to what I as a small farmer need to hear: plan ahead and eliminate all possible risks, and make hay while the sun shines! Thank you, Peter and *Farmer's Weekly*! We always learn and grow.
– Bhekani Thabede, Richards Bay

Companies join forces to improve global orange juice supply chain

Brazil-based Citrosuco, which cultivates fruit and delivers its orange juice all over the world, is pursuing innovative solutions for enhancing its supply chain.

With the adoption of CargoValue, the company says it is in a better position to efficiently plan and manage its entire shipping and inventory schedule in one solution.

The new arrangement will enable it to reduce risks and costs substantially.

A product of Klaveness Digital AS, CargoValue is designed to assist customers in significantly reducing costs and risks associated with both shipping and inventory management.

Citrosuco has five marine terminals, located in Santos (Brazil); Wilmington, (US); Gent (Belgium); Toyohashi (Japan); and Newcastle (Australia). In addition, it has five dedicated ships and one multi-cargo vessel.

According to Luiz Fernando Ragonha Jr, director of Supply Chain Planning at the Santos Port Terminal, the adoption of CargoValue's cutting-edge technology will help Citrosuco keep pace with the latest industry trends and advancements. The implementation of this solution will also play a crucial role in reducing the company's environmental impact. By identifying opportunities for more sustainable transportation and storage practices, it will contribute to its CO_2 emission reduction targets. *– Klaveness Digital*

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
Send your letters to: farmersweekly@caxton.co.za, or Farmer's Weekly, PO Box 1797, Pinegowrie 2123, SA. The views and opinions expressed on the letters page do not necessarily reflect those of Farmer's Weekly or Caxton. Readers' letters will be published and edited at the sole discretion of Farmer's Weekly.

MOST POPULAR ON FARMERSWEEKLY.CO.ZA

HIGHER MAIZE YIELD BOOSTS PRODUCTION FIGURES

The latest Agbiz/IDC Agribusiness Confidence Index shows that agribusiness has significant apprehension about business conditions in South Africa.

Read the full article at
https://bit.ly/3r6f5Gv,
or scan here:
Posted: 21 June 2023.

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FROM FACEBOOK

@FarmersWeeklySA

We shared a throwback post to June 2022, when a **Bonsmara bull was sold for a record-breaking R2,1 million.** Our Facebook followers were shocked at the cost of the bull and had the following to say.
Posted: 26 June 2023.

READERS' COMMENTS

Mthokozisi Patrick Thwala: "No no no, this is not right. R2,1 million for one bull …"

Padington Chizete: "What an investment!"

Gugu Jamangaye Mahlangu: "More than the price of the famous Ankole."

Tau YA Mariri: "I was there with my R10 000 cash. It's like I was having a half-cent!"

Want your photo to be featured as our 'Photo of the Week'? Tag @FarmersWeeklySA on Twitter or Instagram to be considered!

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

The Neighbours @theneighboursfarm

"Like something out of a movie! What an incredible blessing being able to have this as our backdrop daily!"
Via Instagram. Posted: 24 June 2023.

AGRI NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

EU FARMERS WILL 'GIVE UP' DUE TO WOLF AND BEAR ATTACKS – COUNCIL

Several EU member states have raised concerns that farmers will 'give up' on livestock farming due to attacks on their animals by large carnivores, particularly bears and wolves.
– agriland.ie

FRENCH BIRD FLU WAVE ENDS AFTER 10 MILLION BIRDS CULLED

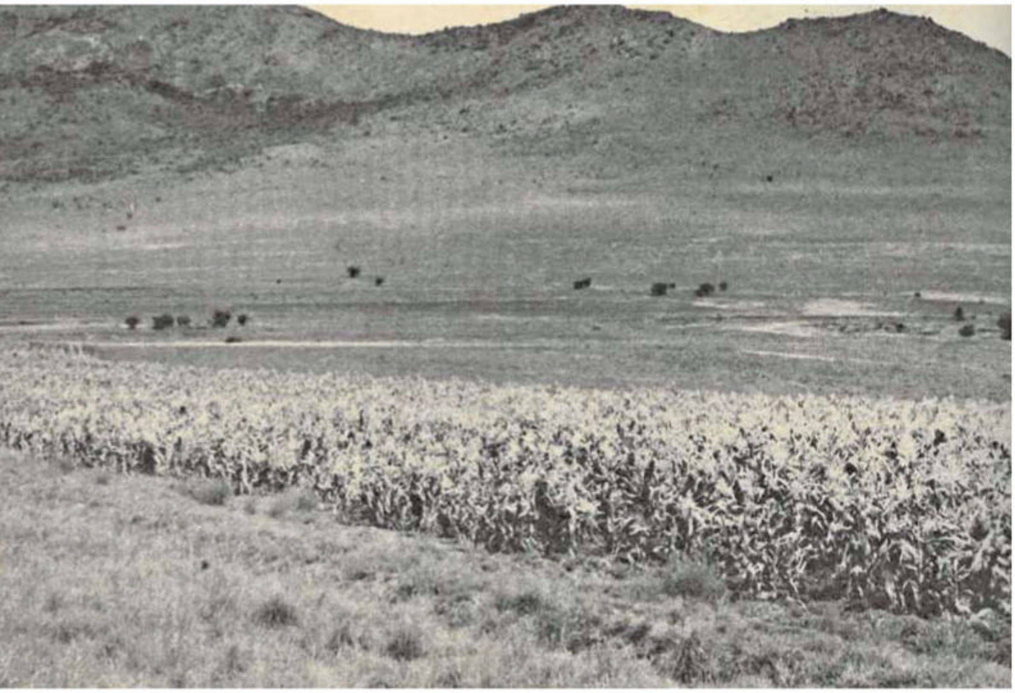
A wave of bird flu outbreaks in France last month has come to a halt after the culling of 10 million birds this season, the farm ministry said on Wednesday, as it confirmed it would launch vaccination against the virus in the autumn.
– reuters.com

FARMERS INVITED TO HELP RESEARCH CULTURED MEAT

A team of Royal Agricultural University researchers looking to understand the risks and opportunities of lab-grown meat is offering farmers a funded opportunity to share their views on how it might affect UK agriculture.
– farmersguide.co.uk

52 YEARS AGO

1911 — 5 November 1971 — 2023



Getting to know the soil is the first step towards realising a good crop. FW ARCHIVE

Land as a production factor

This article described how farmers could optimise utilisation of their lands. *The four main factors in the production process are land, labour, capital and management. Land is both the most important and, in the long run, the most limited.*

The area of South Africa is 122,48 million hectares. Only 8,4% of South Africa was cultivated in 1960. In the years to come, towns and cities will expand, more recreational areas will be developed, and the growing population will demand more food. In other words, our land's importance as a production factor will increase as it becomes more limited.

The knowledge of soil is, therefore, of the utmost importance.

CATEGORIES OF LAND

To ensure optimal utilisation of the soil, a start must be made to divide it into different categories according to production and use. This is necessary to determine the correct use of the soil and to what extent a farmer can intensify.

Some crops do better on heavy soil, while others prefer sandy soils, some crops are more sensitive to flood conditions than others, and some soils are more prone to injury and must be protected by cover crops.

Thus it is necessary to divide our soil into different categories according to the degree of protection they need and the relative profitability of the crops that can be grown in it.

TECHNICAL UNITS

The potential of lands on a certain farm usually differs, so that they do not have identical production functions. How to divide a limited number of changeable production mediums between technical units, whose production-functions differ, is a basic problem for the farmer.

A high-potential land justifies high cost while a low-potential land does not. For example, a farmer who applies an average fertiliser application to a poor land is wasting his money while, at the same time, he would be losing money (through lower-than-necessary production) if he gives an average fertiliser application to good land.

Soil conservation means the maintenance of productivity or the maintenance of the capital that was invested in the soil. In this situation there will be no depreciation in the value of land.

IMPROVEMENT

Strictly speaking, an increase in productivity or capital appreciation can be regarded as soil improvement. The term 'conservation' is used for both soil maintenance and soil improvement. In theory, the individual will only practise conservation if the output as a result of the conservation practices is greater than the costs incurred.

Some practices may give immediate results, while others may not show their actual advantages before several years have passed

Decreased soil fertility can be restored by the application of the correct fertiliser elements, while quite different measures will be required to fight erosion, such as different soil use, less intensive farming systems, and better control over flood water.

RADICAL CHANGES

If the control of erosion requires radical changes in soil use and if this is thought to be necessary for the welfare of the community, group action may be necessary. If such soil conservation measures are not to the economic advantage of the individual, then the cost must be carried by the community.

Soil erosion is often the result of negligence, indifference, ignorance and poor management. In such instances, the solution to the problem may lie in instruction in simple control measures that would require little extra cost.

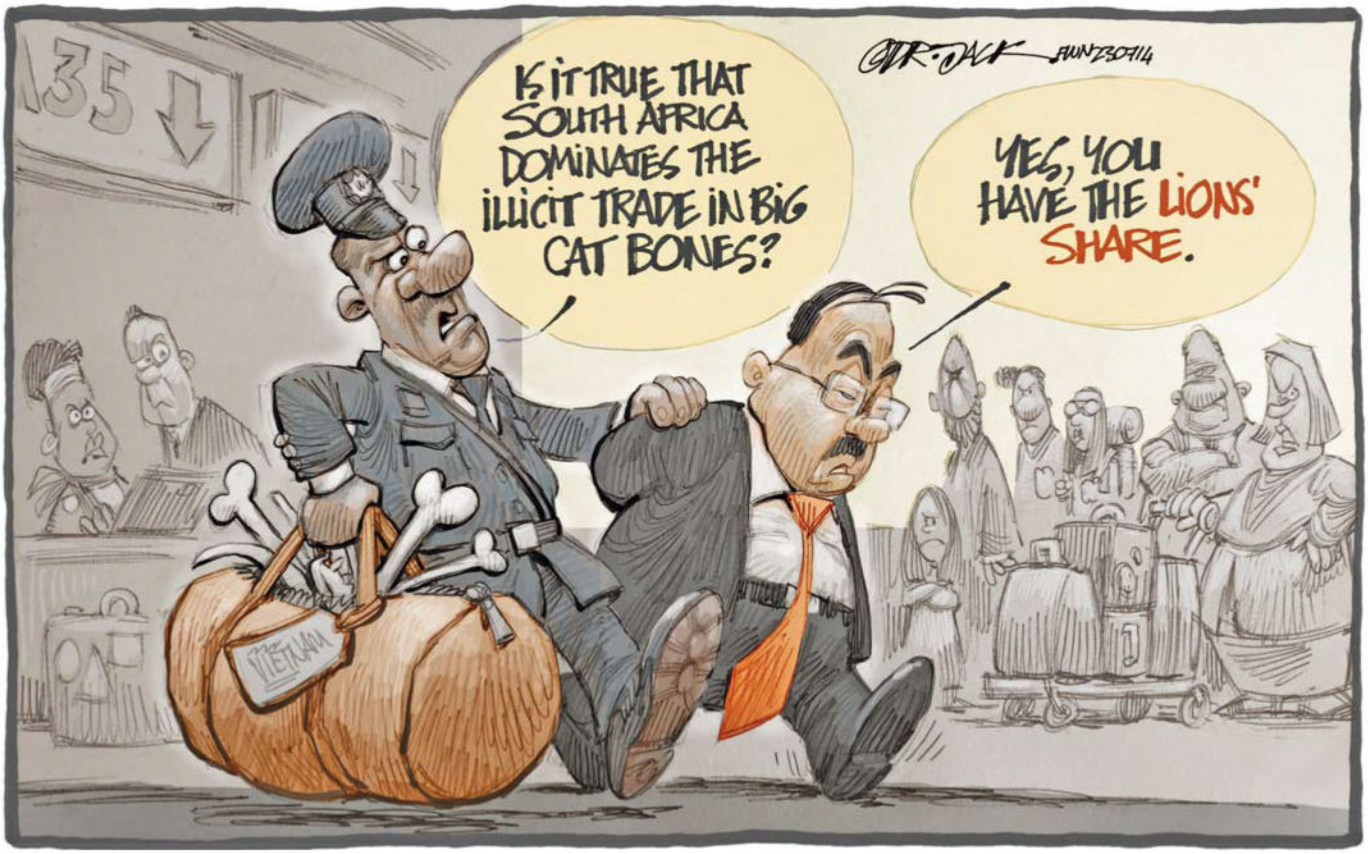
Three economists, Anderson, Heady and Shrader, found that net profit could be increased by changing from present conservation farming systems to economically planned soil conservation systems of farming. They wrote that a programme to teach farmers the advantages of overall economic farm planning for conservation seems particularly appropriate.

PROFITABLE

Many farmers do not believe that conservation practices can be integrated into a profitable farm organisation. Wider acceptance of conservation farming can be gained by showing farmers the advantages of farm plans that consider the unique set of problems of each farm.

Capital, type and area of land, buildings, labour, the farmer's ability and preferences must all be integrated into the ideal conservation plan. **FW**

This article first appeared in the 5 November 1971 issue of *Farmer's Weekly* and has been edited to adhere to the current style of the magazine.


35
IS IT TRUE THAT SOUTH AFRICA DOMINATES THE ILLICIT TRADE IN BIG CAT BONES?
YES, YOU HAVE THE LIONS' SHARE.
VIETNAM

The recent arrest of a 43-year-old man in possession of the bones of five lion carcasses has again turned the spotlight on the illegal trade in lion bones in the country – *see story on page 17.*

‘WE REQUIRE GOVERNMENT, MUNICIPALITIES, STAKEHOLDERS AND LEADERSHIP TO BE WORKING TOGETHER AT ALL LEVELS’

Sandy La Marque, CEO of the KwaZulu-Natal Agricultural Union, on the poor state of roads and infrastructure in the province (*pg 23*).

‘We feel that a lot of the damage could have been prevented if the Department of Water and Sanitation [had] opened [the] sluices of the Clanwilliam Dam earlier’

Jannie Basson, chairperson of the Sandveld Seed Potato Growers’ Association, on the damage caused to potato farms due to the recent floods in the Western Cape (*pg 15*).

‘A few farmers have managed to export guavas successfully, and we would like to further develop this opportunity for farmers to [...] increase their earning potential’

Jacques Jordaan, CEO of the Guava Producers’ Association of South Africa, on the opportunities awaiting growers in the country (*pg 18*).

‘Our management simply does not care about the struggles we go through’

A student at Cedara Agricultural College, who spoke on condition of anonymity, on the alleged appalling conditions there (*pg 24*).

‘As an agricultural community, we need to match the natural hope that South African farmers embody with pragmatic solutions to the complex challenges we face’

Johann Kotzé, current CEO of the South African Pig Producers’ Organisation and incoming CEO of Agri SA, on the agriculture sector (*pg 25*).

Achievers at the National Wool Growers AGM

The wool industry acknowledged its top achievers at the National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) AGM held recently in Gqeberha.

Wool Trust chairperson Herman van Schalkwyk received a Silver Ram for the years he served on NWGA's national and provincial structures, and for his five terms of office at the Wool Trust, totalling 15 years of service that will conclude in 2023.

From left: Zolani Tsheko was elected as vice-chairperson, Billy van Zyl as chairperson, and HB van der Walt as vice-chairperson. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

Dennis Louw (left), vice-chairperson of NWGA Free State, and Herman Archer, chairperson of the branch, received the trophy for the best study group on behalf of Trompsburg from Leon de Beer, NWGA general manager.

The Hollard catastrophe insurance risk cover was the brainchild of Van Schalkwyk, with NWGA members benefitting from a discounted rate.

Misthoek Boerderye near Murraysburg in the Western Cape won the award for the best economically classed clip, sponsored by Hollard, with a performance percentage of 88,24%.

Rooikop Boedery near Fraserburg, in the Northern Cape, took second place and CFB Greeff from Somerset East took third.

Trompsburg in the Free State received the Bennie van der Merwe floating trophy for the best economic study group for the sixth time in a row.

Jacobus le Roux of The Plain near Cathcart in the Eastern Cape won the South African Wool and Mohair Buyers' Association award for fetching the highest price in the 2022 wool season. Le Roux accomplished this with a 15,8-micron Merino lamb wool lot that sold for R303/kg.

General manager Leon de Beer (left) and public relations officer Bonita Francis with their long-service awards.

Long-service awards were given to NWGA head-office staff members general manager Leon de Beer, (20 years), and public relations officer, Bonita Francis (30 years).

Five communities in the Eastern Cape were honoured for outstanding results in developing their sheep: Region 20 Lumanyano Woolgrowers (Tsolo); Region 23 Ludumo Shearing Shed, (between Dordrecht and Komani); Region 24 Luzie Shearing shed, (Tlokoeng); and Region 25 Upper Tele Shearing Shed (Sterkspruit).

Region 21 Allen Water Woolgrowers (Whittlesea) was named overall winner thanks to its use of good-quality rams to improve its flocks. The group produced 46 bales, of which one bin received an average price of R109/kg, with an average of 18,8 microns, and a hogget price of R169/kg, with an average of 16,8 microns.

The communities will receive animal health products from Zoetis, the sponsor of the competition.

Eastern Cape communal farmer Zolani Tsheko was elected the NWGA's new vice-chairperson.

Billy van Zyl was re-elected as the association's chairperson for the third time. He will be steering the association with the assistance of vice-chairperson HB van der Walt. – *Glenneis Kriel*

South Africans thanked for World Seed Congress

At the International Seed Federation (ISF) AGM held recently in Cape Town, president of the federation Marco van Leeuwen and secretary-general Michael Keller recognised the outstanding contributions made to the World Seed Congress held in Cape Town in June by Dr Lukeshni Chetty, general manager of the South African National Seed Organization (SANSOR), and SANSOR's national organising chair, David Malan.

Chetty was thanked for her work in hosting a successful world congress in South Africa, while Malan was recognised for his commitment as the longest-serving chair of a national organising committee. His committee served from 2018 to 2023, as the congress had originally been planned for 2020. The postponement due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not dampen the committee's spirit; indeed, it organised one of the most unforgettable congresses in ISF history, Van Leeuwen and Keller said.

Malan is managing director of Klein Karoo Seed Production, which specialises in the production of high-quality vegetable, forage, pasture and organic seed for seed companies worldwide.

According to Van Leeuwen and Keller, SANSOR was one of the most active and industry-focused national seed associations, and served as a role model for Africa. – *Staff reporter*

Floods cause huge damage in Western Cape

Heavy rains in mid-June resulted in damage of up to R1 billion in the Western Cape, according to early estimates by the province's Ministry of Agriculture.

It seems that most of the damage occurred in the Cape Winelands, Matzikamma and West Coast. Citrus, potato and grain farmers also suffered.

Gerrit van der Merwe, vice-chairperson of the Citrus Growers' Association of Southern Africa in the Western Cape, estimated that Citrusdal farmers had lost about two weeks of picking time due to the heavy rain.

Infrastructure damage had also prevented them from sending their fruit to market, and the Port of Cape Town was around a week behind schedule.

Van der Merwe said he knew of many farmers who had lost fruit or experienced damage that caused the fruit to be diverted to the juice market.

Fruit drop was experienced on some of the early cultivars, and many farmers suffered damage to nets, roads, irrigation equipment and pump houses, and equipment.

Van der Merwe said a spell of good weather since then had enabled farmers to catch up on picking.

Jannie Basson, chairperson of the Sandveld Seed Potato Growers' Association, said farmers in the region had not suffered too much damage to their potato crops, thanks to the low water-holding capacity of the sandy soils.

MORE RAIN IS EXPECTED, AND FARMERS WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO START REPAIRS UNTIL LATER

"Many farmers along the Olifants River, including myself, suffered infrastructure damage. We feel that a lot of the damage could have been prevented if the Department of Water and Sanitation [had] opened [the] sluices of the Clanwilliam Dam earlier," Basson said.

He added that more rain was expected in the region, and farmers would probably not be able to start repairs until after the rainy season.

While losses were still being tallied, the Western Cape Bee Industry Association reported that one commercial beekeeper had lost 1 500 hives.

The Berg River and Citrusdal areas seemed to be the most affected when it came to beehives.

Chris Nicklin, chairperson of the Western Cape Bee Industry Association, said beekeepers often kept their hives close to rivers, usually on 2m-high platforms to prevent water damage.

In some cases, however, the water levels had exceeded this height.

Nicklin said the loss of beehives could result in a shortage of beehives for pollination services, particularly early in spring, for crops such as blueberries and plums.

He asked the public to keep an eye out for beehives that had washed down rivers, and to contact the association at info@wcba.co.za, with the registration number of the hive, to help beekeepers track down lost equipment. – *Glenneis Kriel*

Zimbabwe has best-ever tobacco marketing season

Zimbabwe has recorded its best tobacco season on record, having sold at least 261 million kilograms to date in the 2023 marketing season.

Speaking to journalists during a post-cabinet briefing, minister of information and communications technology and courier services Jenfan Muswere said the crop had surpassed the previous record of 259 million kilograms.

He said that 85% of the tobacco crop was currently produced by smallholder farmers.

"[Sixty percent of these] are beneficiaries of the land reform programme, demonstrating that government policies in the agriculture sector are sound and continue to bear fruit," Muswere told TimesLIVE.

Zimbabwe's Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB) announced that sales increased 54,72% from the same period in 2022. A total of R14,4 billion had been realised in 2023 so far.

The country's 2023 tobacco marketing season, which opened in March, was expected to run until August.

However, the Zimbabwe Situation news service reported that small-scale black farmers in the country were selling most of their crop to China.

They were heavily in debt, and seeing minimal benefits, the news service said.

This was reportedly because of a contract system that locked the farmers into negative loans and prices, often with Chinese companies operating under the state-owned China National Tobacco Corporation, claimed to be the largest cigarette maker in the world.

According to Reuters, tobacco was one of the biggest export earners in Zimbabwe, which aimed to increase production to 300 million kilograms by 2025.

Since the collapse of commercial agriculture following the Zimbabwe government's seizure of land from white farmers in 2000, tobacco has emerged as agriculture's most successful subsector.

Government statistics showed that it accounted for more than 12% of exports in January 2023.

Tobacco land use grew to 117 000ha this year from 110 000ha in 2022, according to the TIMB.

The industry also saw an increase in the number of tobacco farmers, to 149 000 this year from 123 000 in 2022. – *Annelie Coleman*

Market day allows community gardens to gain exposure and sell their produce

Farmers from all over the country had the opportunity to showcase their produce to the public. **Jyothi Laldas** reports on the farmers' experience at the Shoprite and Checkers Market Day.

Giving a platform to community farmers, the Shoprite and Checkers Market Day showcased more than 30 community food gardens from all over South Africa recently.

The farmers from the food gardens were given an opportunity to sell their fresh and organically grown produce directly to the public at selected Shoprite and Checkers supermarkets across the country.

The initiative was launched in 2017 and serves as an opportunity for small-scale food gardens supported by the Shoprite Group to access valuable retail experience while generating some additional income, as well as gaining exposure to their respective communities.

Checkers
ACT!
Checkers
MARK
DAY

Andiswa Bukula (left) and Nokwanda Nkqaye from Siyazama Community Garden with their produce. SUPPLIED

Dudu Radebe from the Dithaka Dikopane Co-operative in Walkerville, Gauteng, said: "We were delighted to sell our fresh vegetables directly to the public at the Checkers Southgate supermarket. The response from the community was fantastic. Everyone was excited to sample our produce and we cannot wait for more such opportunities."

Mpho Mutaung from the Carroll Shaw Memorial Centre in Randfontein said: "As small farmers we struggle to find markets, but the large customer footprint at Shoprite and Checkers enables us to sell to more customers."

In a statement, the Shoprite Group said it was committed to ensuring food security, and currently supported more than 200 community food gardens and over 3 500 home gardens, which impacted almost 55 000 beneficiaries.

"In the past year, more than 2 700 community members were trained in sustainable food gardening, and the gardens collectively produced a harvest of more than 31 500kg, providing almost 100 000 meals."

The following gardens participated in the Shoprite and Checkers Market Day, selling beans, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, onions, potatoes, spinach, tomatoes and more.

KWAZULU-NATAL

- God's Acres – Shoprite Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg
- Iqabungelihle Community Garden – Checkers Durban North
- Siyazondla kwaPhindangene – Shoprite Ulundi
- Thubelihle Special Opportunity School – Shoprite Ladysmith
- Velemseni Farming Group – Shoprite Estcourt.

EASTERN CAPE

- Siyalima Asidlali Co-operative – Shoprite Mount Ayliff
- Star Uplifting Centre – Shoprite King William's Town
- Wathint' Abafazi – Shoprite Ziyabuya, Gqeberha.

GAUTENG

- Carroll Shaw Memorial Centre – Checkers Tambotie Mall Randfontein
- Dithaka Dikopane Cooperative – Checkers Southgate, Johannesburg
- Mahata Mmoho Agricultural Co-operative – Checkers Hyper Vanderbijlpark
- Mmakgomo Agricultural Co-operative – Checkers Pretoria North.

FREE STATE

- Dikonyana Community Based Care Center – Shoprite Heidedal, Bloemfontein
- Free State Rural Women Assembly Agroecological Hub – Shoprite Botshabelo Mall
- Ntsoanatsatsi Community Garden – Shoprite Setsing, Phuthaditjhaba
- Qholaqhwe Garden Project – Shoprite Mandela Park, Phuthaditjhaba.

LESOTHO

- Action Lesotho – Shoprite Leribe, Butha-Buthe
- St Cecilia Orphanage Home – Shoprite Sefika, Maseru.

LIMPOPO

- Marubini Multi-Purpose Women's Primary Cooperative – Checkers Makhado Crossing
- Ndlovu Care Group – Shoprite Dennilton, Groblersdal
- Ratanang Agricultural Cooperative – Shoprite Mankweng, Polowane
- We Can Women's Development Co-operative – Shoprite Paledi, Polokwane.

NORTH WEST

- Bakgatla Ba Mosetlha – Shoprite Temba
- Nthabiseng Skills Training Centre for the Disabled – Checkers Rustenburg.

MPUMALANGA

- Ploughs and Feathers Co-operative – Checkers New Hazyview Junction
- Sibonile Agricultural Co-operative – Shoprite Acornhoek Mall, Nelspruit
- Timbavati Project – Shoprite Acornhoek Plaza, Nelspruit
- Too Fresh Produce Cooperative – Checkers Ermelo.

WESTERN CAPE

- Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme – Shoprite Kleinmond
- Our Garden – Checkers Protea Heights, Brackenfell
- Siyazama Community Garden – Checkers Somerset West.

Agriculture's voice needed in the carbon debate

The urgent need for the agriculture sector to ramp up efforts to communicate carbon emission reductions it has achieved was highlighted at the Alltech ONE conference, held in Dublin, Ireland, in June. This comes as the public backlash against agriculture's contribution to global warming intensifies, bringing with it industry-crushing legislation.

Speakers referred to a recent proposal by the Irish government to cull 200 000 dairy cows in order to reduce methane emissions and help the country meet its climate goals. The Netherlands government has likewise proposed shutting down 3 000 farms to comply with Green Deal policies.

Speaking about the role played by the media in painting agriculture as the greatest culprit of global warming, Tara McCarthy, global vice-president for environmental, social and corporate governance at Alltech, said the media were challenging farmers' right to exist. "Unless we all work together to change the message and communicate the realities of farming in a way that is simple to grasp, we are allowing influencers to annihilate us and pit us against each other," she said.

McCarthy noted that the industry had already done much to reduce carbon and methane emissions.

"Our industry is navigating unprecedented disruption, yet remains confident and committed to evolving towards a more sustainable food system. The key to success will be the development of innovative solutions, but even more critically, the capacity of the industry to work together across the value chain. We're in a decade of redefinition and must be very purposeful in the message we're giving the public."

Dr Vaughn Holder, director of ruminant research at Alltech, said carbon dioxide was the bigger culprit when it came to global warming, yet this was not the impression given by the media. "Methane is the biggest focus and very dramatic statements are being made about how diets affect the planet."

In addition, the sequestration potential of agriculture had been largely ignored.

"If we remove all of the cattle, what do we do with all the by-products and waste that they consume? If it's left to ferment in the veld or sent to a landfill, the greenhouse gases are 50 times more than what would have been produced if it was fed to cattle."

Alltech CEO Dr Mark Lyons said agriculture had great potential to provide nutrition for all, help rural communities, and replenish the planet's resources.

"We capture more carbon with animals than without them. Yet big food companies are setting climate goals based on what consumers are demanding, not what science shows […] We need to send the correct message down the value chain to inform the public about the potential of agriculture to aid climate cooling." – *Lindi Botha*

Traveller arrested with lion bones in his luggage

The slaughtering and smuggling of captive-bred lions in South Africa to meet the demand for lion bones is an abomination, according to Dr Gerhard Verdoorn, CropLife South Africa's operations and stewardship manager.

He told *Farmer's Weekly* that the practice degraded the iconic African lion to a mere slaughter animal. The suppliers of illegally obtained lion bones and the smugglers needed to be brought to book and be met with the full might of the law, he said.

This followed the recent arrest of a 43-year-old man at OR Tambo International Airport who had attempted to travel to Vietnam, via Qatar, from South Africa while in possession of the bones of five lion carcasses. According to animal welfare organisation Four Paws, the suspect had been arrested when the security guards at the airport discovered suspicious items in his luggage and alerted the Germiston-based Hawks' Economic Protected Resources unit.

Smugglers who are slaughtering lions for their bones need to meet the full might of the law. FOUR PAWS

Police also seized foreign currency, a cell phone and two passports.

The Hawks, Bidvest Security, Crime Intelligence and an official from the Department of Environmental Affairs were at the scene.

The suspect was charged for illegal dealing in wildlife, possession of lion bones and contravening the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, and appeared in the Kempton Park Magistrate's Court on 26 June 2023.

According to a media statement by the Hawks, the investigation to arrest more suspects was continuing.

Fiona Miles, director of Four Paws South Africa, said the incident was not the first of its kind and was evident of just how out of control South Africa's commercial big cat industry had become. The commercial exploitation of big cats in the country was a conduit for the illegal trade of big cat body parts to Asia, as well as a primary source of the parts.

"The country is now the largest exporter of big cats and their parts from anywhere in the world.

"Commercial exploitation on this scale comes with significant animal welfare concerns, such as exploiting captive animals and threatening wild populations of big cat species," Miles added. – *Annelie Coleman*

Guava industry looks for growth and improved cultivars

Despite a marginally lower crop predicted for this season, plenty of opportunities await guava producers in South Africa. **Glenneis Kriel** reports on the industry's recent annual general meeting.

The Guava Producers' Association of South Africa expects production in the Western Cape to reach approximately 25 300t this season, which is slightly lower than last season's 25 955t, but higher than the industry average of about 24 700t.

The impact on production of the cold front that hit the Western Cape from mid-June is still uncertain, according to Jacques Jordaan, CEO of the association. Speaking at the association's annual general meeting held recently in Simondium, he said that the cold had caused roots and fruit to stop growing, and this could affect fruit size and quality.

Based on feedback given by various farmers, the season had started later than usual in most regions, and more than three weeks late in Kraaifontein and Paarl. Although the season was not that late in Wellington, guavas in Wellington and Porterville seemed to ripen more slowly than usual, leaving farmers wondering whether this would result in a large quantity of fruit ripening simultaneously.

Jordaan pointed out that the area under production had declined from 653ha in 2017 to 487ha in 2022, and 462ha in 2023. Yield, however, had increased from 43t/ha in 2017 to 53t/ha in 2022 thanks to improved efficiencies.

Farmers at the meeting asked for the age of trees to be included in the association's statistics in future, as guava trees could produce commercial yields for over 80 years.

Jordaan blamed the decline in the area under production on farmers switching to more lucrative crops, and on fruit theft.

He said the industry was trying to address this through the strategic marketing of fruit, and the development of new markets and new varieties.

"More than 70% of the guavas produced in the Western Cape are sold to the juice market, while just over 20% are sold in the fresh market, and the rest are sold in the canning market. A few farmers have managed to export guavas successfully, and we would like to further develop this opportunity for farmers to diversify their risks and increase their earning potential," he said.

Jordaan added that it was not ideal that most of the fruit in the Western Cape was produced from the Fan Retief variety.

"We need to identify alternative varieties that might, for instance, work better on the fresh market."

South African guava producers are expected to harvest a 25 300t crop in the coming season, a slight increase on the industry's seasonal average of 24 700t. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Salomie Willemse, senior researcher at the Agricultural Research Council, gave feedback on guava cultivar evaluations and production trials that started in 2017, and identified the top five cultivars that were compared with Fan Retief.

She said that all five had a better appearance and internal colour than Fan Retief. Whereas Fan Retief fruit weighed 93,3g on average, all five trialled cultivars had fruit with a higher average, starting at 148,9g and going up to 225,8g. The seed percentage of the top five was also lower than Fan Retief's 69,5%, ranging from 59,3% to 46,2%.

While the aim of the cultivar evaluations was to identify cultivars that would perform well on the fresh market, the marketability of the fruit for canning and juice would also be investigated.

In response to the research feedback, farmers said that they would like to have data on the yield potential of the cultivars included in the research.

Chris Smith, an independent researcher involved in the trials, replied that the average load of fruit yielded per tree for each variety had been compared visually with that of Fan Retief.

Hugh Campbell, general manager of Hortgro Science, spoke about the benefits of having a plant improvement scheme in the deciduous fruit and grape industries, and said it was regrettable that the guava industry did not have such a scheme.

He added that the main benefit of such a scheme was that it ensured producers had access to well-balanced trees that were free of various viruses and visually free of pests and diseases.

In response, the farmers said they were concerned about the cost implications of such a scheme, as the guava industry was much smaller than the deciduous fruit and grape industries, and the majority of producers simply made their own plant material from trees in existing orchards.

Campbell replied that the industry would not have to "reinvent the wheel", but could use systems that were already in place. He added that the introduction of new technologies and systems had helped to bring down the cost of testing trees for viruses from about 50c/tree to just under 10c/tree.

Jordaan said that it might be too soon for the industry to jump into a tree certification scheme "boots and all", but a good start would be to create a safe space where clean genetic material of various cultivars was stored in case a disease hit the industry and wiped out trees.

UN's Food Outlook report shows global output is set for expansion

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) released a report in June that shows the world food import bill is forecast to reach a new record this year, but grow at a slower pace than last year.

According to the FAO, this prediction was driven by higher quotations for fruit, vegetables, sugar and dairy products, as well as dampened demand, particularly in the most economically vulnerable countries.

The global food bill was expected to rise to US$1,98 trillion (about R36,6 trillion) in 2023, up 1,5% from 2022. It rose 11% in 2022 and 18% in 2021.

Food imports by advanced economies were likely to expand, but the import bill for the group of Least Developed Countries was predicted to decline 1,5%. The import bill for net food-importing developing countries (NFIDCs) was set to decline 4,9%, the organisation said.

"The decline in food import volumes is a concerning development in both groups, suggesting a decline in purchasing capacity. These concerns are amplified by the fact that lower international prices for a number of primary food items have not, or at least not fully, translated into lower prices at the domestic retail level, suggesting that cost-of-living pressures could persist in 2023," the FAO stated.

The FAO's *Food Outlook* examines changes in the food component of the consumer price index for NFIDCs, and how currency movements, especially in relation to the US dollar, affect food price inflation.

The drop in the dollar during the 2007-08 global food crisis helped food importers offset food price hikes, but the reverse effect has marked recent years. – *Staff reporter*

World wheat production is expected to decline 3% this year from its all-time high of 777 million tons in 2022, due mainly to expected decreases in the Russian Federation and Australia. UNSPLASH

Helping create resilient food systems

A report released by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification shows that droughts have increased nearly 30% since 2000, posing a threat to agricultural systems and costing billions in global economic losses.

However, sustainable land management practices, such as cropping, reduced tillage and improved irrigation techniques, can help farmers regain control over their land and mitigate drought.

Roland Bunch, CEO of Better Soils, Better Lives, wrote in the report that the underlying cause of drought was not a decrease in total rainfall, as organic matter was a critical component of water storage.

He said the US Department of Agriculture's National Resources Conservation Service estimated that for every 1% increase in organic matter, the amount of water available to plants increased by 230 000ℓ/ha.

Dead vegetation, living roots, worms and microbes added carbon to the soil. They eventually formed soil aggregates with pore spaces that acted like a sponge, and water trickled down into these pores.

According to Bunch, another consequence of intensive agriculture and drought was the worsening hunger crisis. Before 2010, famines in Africa rarely affected more than 10 million people. By 2020 it had risen to 40 million, and last year rose to 60 million people. – *Staff reporter*

World in brief

JAPAN

Many young workers are relocating to Japan's rural areas to pursue their hobbies while making their own food, trying out a lifestyle that integrates farming and their vocations.

According to Greenpeace Japan's executive director, Jun Hoshikawa, relocating and pursuing hobbies in farming communities was first popularised in the 1990s. Today, the concept is flourishing again after the COVID-19 pandemic and the issues surrounding city life.

SINGAPORE

According to the Singapore Food Agency (SFA), about 90% of food consumed in Singapore is imported, yet only 1% of the land is set aside for agriculture.

To reduce dependency on other countries and ensure food security, the SFA is working to diversify food sources and promote local production.

Meanwhile, a team of scientists in Singapore say the keratin in hair can contribute to local vegetable production and food security, adding that biowaste has the potential to become a sustainable agricultural input for hydroponic farming.

THE NETHERLANDS

The EU has approved plans for the Dutch government to buy out farmers as part of a plan to slash nitrogen emissions, a major source of which is livestock farms.

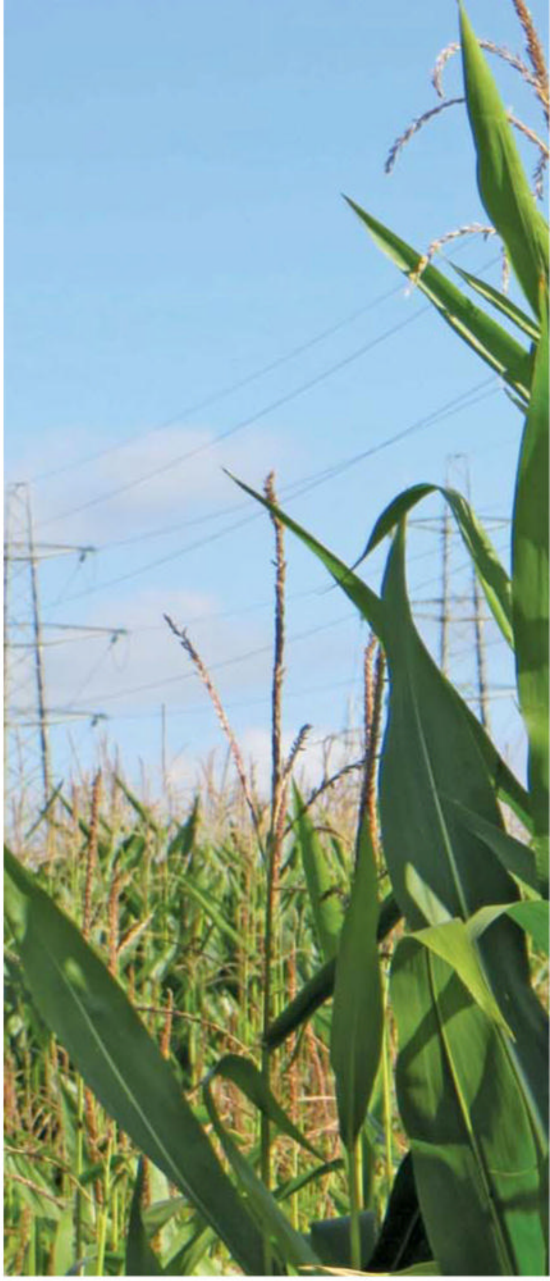
Farmers in the Netherlands have been staging protests over emissions reduction targets since October 2019.

Nearly €1,5 billion (about R27,7 billion) will be used to compensate farmers who voluntarily close farms located near nature reserves. About 3 000 farms are expected to be eligible.

Farmers held demonstrations, blocking highways last year to protest the reforms, which they said were an existential threat to their way of life. – *Staff reporter*

Bayer positions itself to cash in on regenerative agriculture

Bayer's CropScience division is planning to capitalise on opportunities presented by the shift to regenerative agriculture. **Glenneis Kriel** reports on the company's plans.



Regenerative agriculture is not just a 'buzzword' for Bayer, but a means of creating a more sustainable food system with the capacity to feed the world's growing population, while using less water and land, and with a smaller environmental impact.

This was according to Rodrigo Santos, president of Bayer's CropScience division, who spoke at the recent Bayer CropScience Innovation Summit streamed from New York, US.

Jeremy Williams, Bayer's head of commercial ecosystems and digital farming solutions of the CropScience division, said that Bayer wanted to define, reshape and increase the area under regenerative agriculture to over 162 million hectares. He said this would contribute to the company's efforts to reduce the environmental impact of its crop protection solutions and the greenhouse gas emissions of the cropping systems it served by 30%, as well as improve the livelihoods of more than 100 million smallholder farmers by 2030. The company also aimed to reduce the water used to produce certain crops, such as rice, by 25% over this time.

Williams envisioned that Bayer could access more than than €100 billion (about R2 trillion) in markets servicing regenerative agriculture, which would double the division's potential market, which currently stood at more than €100 billion for its core portfolio alone.

Several Bayer CropScience leaders and scientists spoke about the way in which the company would be able to boost regenerative agriculture through five innovation platforms, namely breeding, biotechnology, chemistry, biologicals and data science.

Robert Reiter, head of research and development at the CropScience division, said Bayer was well positioned to cash in on this market, as it was already a market leader.

In addition to this, the company had invested more than €2,5 billion (R506 billion) in research and development annually.

Reiter said that 15 projects had advanced in 2022. These included new crop protection active ingredients, new seed traits and digital models. Bayer had also refreshed its seed portfolio with 500 new hybrids and variety deployments, and its crop protection portfolio with 10 new formulation launches and more than 250 new registrations.

'OUR PROJECTS INCLUDE NEW CROP PROTECTION ACTIVE INGREDIENTS, SEED TRAITS AND DIGITAL MODELS'

Mike Graham, head of breeding at the CropScience division, said that Bayer not only had an unmatched germplasm library for the development of new seed technologies, but was also advancing existing breeding technologies. At the same time, it was developing next-generation tools such as gene editing to create designer seeds for growers of maize, soya bean, cotton, vegetables and other crops.

Graham added that machine learning and artificial intelligence had accelerated breeding cycles from between four and six years to about four months.

A highlight from the talk of Dr Kelly Gillespie, vice-president of digital ecosystem services at Bayer, was the way in which the company's Preceon Smart Corn System aimed to transform maize production. Where ordinary maize plants were 2,8m to 3,7m tall, plants grown under this system measured around 2,1m tall, rendering the plants less susceptible to wind damage and making it easier to apply crop protection and field placement through digital solutions.

The systems approach included digital tools to support planting and showcased the transition from selling inputs to selling solutions, Gillepsie said.

She added that 75% of farmers involved in the trials so far had said they would consider planting the system on a third of their land. The short-stature maize could be stacked with current and next-generation insect control traits.

Axel Trautwein, head of regulatory science of the CropScience division, said their new CropKey approach was revolutionising the development of small molecules.

Bayer can access more than €100 billion (about R2 trillion) in markets servicing regenerative agriculture, according to the company. PXFUEL

"In the past, we used to have a library and had to select solutions from there. With new digital technologies, we're now able to design instead of select new solutions."

He said this was accelerating the rate at which new products were being developed and had resulted in the development of 10 new modes of action. Bayer's new herbicide mode of action for broadacre weed control, specifically, was the first in the industry for over three decades.

Jessica Christiansen, head of sustainability and business stewardship of the CropScience division, said that Bayer, through its open innovation partnerships, aimed to reach more than €1,5 billion (R30 billion) of the biologicals market, which was envisaged to double to over €20 billion (R400 billion) by 2035. She said that nitrogen-fixing biotech in particular presented opportunities because it enabled farmers to grow more with less and reduce emissions and costs in the case of maize and wheat.

Biological-based crop protection would also present opportunities, as it enabled producers to reduce chemical residue in fruit and vegetables.

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Thomas Eickhoff, chief science officer for digital farming solutions at Bayer, spoke about the way in which advancements in precision agriculture and digital farming technology were helping farmers to maximise productivity and the sustainability of their land and agricultural practices.

He said that Bayer's Climate FieldView had become an essential decision-making tool, with subscriptions on more than 90 million hectares globally. In addition to delivering production insights and recommendations, the platform was a gateway to creating value chain solutions, serving as a system of record for customers' climate-smart farming practices and powering Bayer's global carbon programmes.

Eickhoff added that earlier this year, Bayer had also unveiled a new cloud-based enterprise solution, AgPowered Services, powered by the new Microsoft Azure Data Manager for Agriculture. It offered a suite of open-source, advanced digital capabilities and robust digital infrastructure that allowed innovators to focus all their energy into the development of new solutions, rather than having to build solutions from scratch.

Farmers warned of warmer, drier season ahead

The highly favourable conditions of the La Niña state of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are drawing to an end after three years, according to the South African Weather Service (SAWS). This is expected to bring in the historically drier El Niño phase later this year, which could have a negative impact on harvests.

"ENSO is currently in a neutral state, and forecasts indicate that it is likely to move into a weak El Niño state during late winter and early spring, eventually strengthening into a strong El Niño state for the remainder of the summer season," the SAWS said in its Seasonal Climate Watch for June to October 2023.

Essentially, El Niño causes warmer water to spread further and stay closer to the surface, which releases more heat into the atmosphere, creating wetter and warmer air. The regional effects are complicated, however, and some places may be both warmer and cooler than expected at different points in the year.

With the likelihood of warmer months ahead, farmers are being cautioned to remain prepared. Paul Makube, senior agricultural economist at FNB, said changing global weather patterns would most likely have significant consequences for South African farmers, especially those involved in livestock and grain production.

"After enjoying three years of abundant rains and favourable conditions thanks to La Niña, South Africa is now heading into an El Niño phase, which typically translates to drier weather and creates uncertainty for farmers, with the potential to negatively impact yields.

"The previous La Niña years were a boon for farmers, with above-average rains supporting agriculture and leading to higher yields in field crops, fruit, vegetables, and even improved grazing pastures for livestock," Makube said.

He said the anticipated shift to El Niño conditions presented a new set of challenges for farmers, who were already facing many other factors that affected their activities. These included load-shedding, changing consumer patterns, declining consumer confidence due to lower levels of disposable income, and relatively elevated farming input costs.

He said that changing weather patterns would almost certainly exacerbate these challenges and place upward pressure on costs for farmers and food prices for consumers.

"Adaptation by farmers is crucial in the face of the coming hot and dry conditions caused by El Niño, and for livestock farmers this means taking steps now to ensure an appropriate balance between feed availability and stock numbers," Makube said.

However, Wandile Sihlobo, chief economist at Agbiz, said the intensity of the El Niño state, its duration and impact on crop production remained uncertain.

In the event of a weak El Niño state, the current soil moisture conditions could support crop conditions and ensure another fairly decent harvest as in 2018/19, which was also an El Niño period. Notably, the season before 2018/19 was not even as favourably wet as the past four seasons.

Makube was optimistic about the short-term fortunes of South African crop farmers, pointing out that the sector was likely to end the current harvesting season on a positive note, with projections of a good harvest of around 19 million tons.

"The extensive rains have also served to replenish groundwater reserves and soil moisture levels, which puts farmers on a positive footing going into the next planting season," he said. – *Jyothi Laldas*

Department allays water application fears

Transformation provisions in the draft regulations regarding the Procedural Requirements for Water Use Licence Applications and Amendments will only apply to new applications for water-use licences, according to the Department of Water and Sanitation (the department).

According to the provisions, certain enterprises would need up to 75% black shareholding to apply for water licences, with the shareholding requirement depending on the volume of water applied for or the area covered, in the case of commercial forestry.

The department clarified this during a meeting with Agri SA, which was concerned that the proposed regulations could be used against lawful water users when they had to apply for water-use licences in future. This would put the agriculture sector and food security in jeopardy, according to Agri SA.

The department, however, said that the transformation provisions would not apply to the renewal of existing water-use licences, or water-use applications that arose from compulsory licensing. This meant that the relicensing of water-use allocations made prior to when the National Water Act (No. 36 of 1998) came into effect would not be affected.

According to the department, 98% of available water resources in South Africa had already been allocated, which meant that the transformation requirements would only apply to the remaining 1,5%.

The department said it would be willing to consider amendments to the draft regulations and encouraged Agri SA to make a written submission in this regard.

Janse Rabie, Agri SA's legal and policy executive, said Agri SA had retained external legal counsel to assist with the preparation of comments on the draft regulations, which were due for submission by 18 July 2023.

Dr Sandile Ndlungwane, North West executive of the African Farmers' Association of South Africa, said: "We seriously need water reform in the country, as most of the water allocated to the agriculture sector went to white farmers."

He said water storage capacity would have to be increased to make more water available to the sector and to further unlock production potential by empowering previously disadvantaged farmers and new entrants. – *Glenneis Kriel*

Poor state of roads a concern for KZN farmers

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) farmers are struggling with poor road infrastructure across the province. The already damaged roads were all but destroyed when heavy rain battered parts of KZN in April last year, and have taken a further beating with the above-average rainfall experienced over the past year and a half.

Yet another downpour at the end of June 2023 caused further damage in some parts of the province.

The state of the majority of KZN's rural roads was in the spotlight due to the neglect of maintenance and upgrades to rural infrastructure throughout KZN.

According to the KZN agricultural union Kwanalu, the poor condition of roads and general infrastructure in rural KZN continued to stifle food security and economic growth.

Kwanalu last year welcomed the launch of Sanral's Vala Zonke pothole-reporting app in August, and recently called again on its members, agribusinesses and the general public to report potholes by using the app. Stakeholders from all levels of the value and supply chains should report poor road conditions to help make KZN's infrastructural repairs and maintenance a priority, it said.

Kwanalu CEO Sandy La Marque said their members had been tirelessly trying to have potholes and bad roads repaired.

"We thank Sanral for [its] progressive stance towards addressing the state of rural infrastructure in the country. We have been informed that all entries logged via the app will receive attention. Collectively, we can make a difference to highlight this issue, and we encourage all those who use rural roads to please log potholes and road issues on the app."

In March last year, Kwanalu conducted a road survey to quantify the lack of systemic road maintenance and how this was hindering the collection and supply of goods and services in agricultural and rural areas.

Kwanalu thereafter launched a roads campaign to address the urgent need for action at district, provincial and national levels.

"We require government, municipalities, stakeholders and leadership to be working together at all levels to ensure that the focus of attending to the matter of infrastructure is done with the key economic implications in mind," La Marque said.

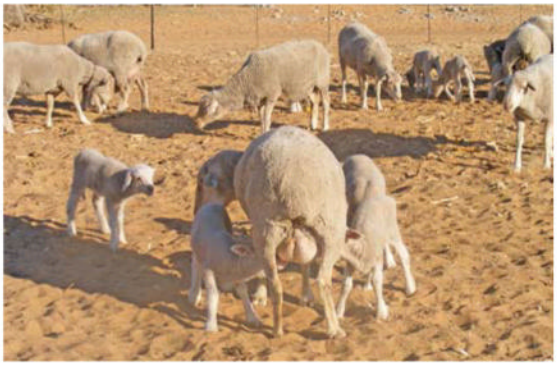
Following the destruction caused by last year's floods, many farmers embarked on their own restoration efforts. The heavy rains of April 2022, where some areas saw as much as 400mm fall over 24 hours, resulted in many rural single-access roads being washed away and rendered nearly impassable or near a state of collapse. Government had yet to repair many of these roads. – *Jyothi Laldas*

Sports brand says no to mutilation of lambs

The Four Paws animal welfare organisation has welcomed a decision by sportswear brand Nike to commit to the certified Responsible Wool Standard, which excludes products made from wool from sheep that have been subject to mulesing, a practice carried out to prevent flystrike. Following the decision by Nike, Fiona Miles, the director of Four Paws South Africa, said more consumers were demanding higher animal welfare from brands, prompting a growing number of companies to take action and end the mulesing of sheep.

According to Four Paws, the process involved cutting pieces of skin from two- to 10-week-old lambs without pain relief. This resulted in fear and stress, but above all intense pain that could last for days.

The method was practised only in Australia, the world´s largest supplier of Merino wool, and was banned in South Africa. There were pain-free alternatives to mulesing, such as switching to breeding sheep that were naturally flystrike-resistant.



Mulesing of lambs takes place only in Australia; it has long been done away with in South Africa. SUPPLIED

"Mulesing no longer occurs in South Africa and we commend local wool [producers] for doing away with the practice a number of years ago now. We also commend Nike for committing to the certified Responsible Wool Standard in its product range. This is a truly historic moment for animal welfare in the textiles industry and we look forward to other brands following suit," Miles told *Farmer's Weekly*.

Rebecca Picallo Gil, head of the Wool Campaign at Four Paws, said in a statement that, with the upcoming mulesing season in Australia due to start, Nike's news had come at a crucial time and sent a strong signal to that country's wool producers.

Nike's decision followed an action by tens of thousands of supporters globally who had teamed up with Four Paws to fight for better animal welfare in the sports apparel market.

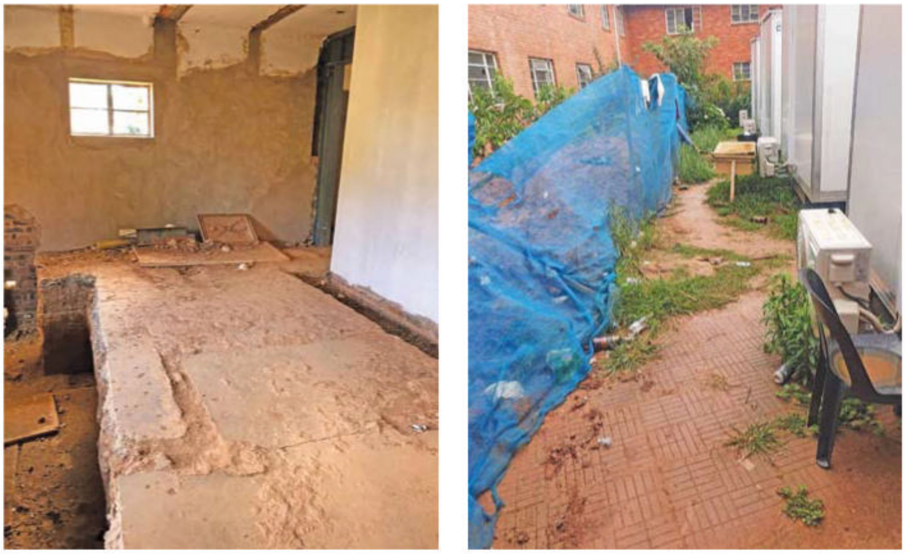
South Africa's National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) condemned the practice of mulesing as early as 2007.

The country's wool producers adopted a unanimous and unopposed resolution to declare mulesing an unacceptable practice at the 2007 NWGA congress.

The congress also fully endorsed and commended the breeding, animal welfare management and flock management developments that had taken place over many years. These had effectively rendered mulesing unnecessary and, as a result, redundant in South Africa. – *Annelie Coleman*

Students claim that living conditions at college are 'inhumane'

Authorities respond to student protest at KwaZulu-Natal agricultural college, writes **Jyothi Laldas**.



Construction at the residence at the Cedara College of Agriculture has been left incomplete, leaving students without proper facilities. SUPPLIED

Students at the Cedara College of Agriculture outside Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal say the living conditions they are subjected to at the campus are 'inhumane' and 'unbearable'.

Cedara, an agricultural college and research station near Howick, offers a two-year higher certificate in agriculture and a three-year diploma in agriculture, and students can specialise in either animal production or crop cultivation.

It provides vocational training in dairying and the raising of pigs, and the production of cultivated pastures and fodder crops, and has a long-standing history of producing some of South Africa's top agriculturists.

However, the reputation of the institution, which accommodates 110 students in its residence, has come into question, with students protesting the alleged appalling living conditions they are being forced to endure at the college.

Some 100 students stood up in protest at the end of May, which resulted in the students being removed from the campus and the facility being closed for almost two full weeks, allegedly on instruction of the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, Super Zuma.

He allegedly accused students of 'misbehaving' during a Workers' Month event taking place at the Cedara sportsfield at the time.

Students claimed that about 80 male students were living in small mobile units and sharing just five bathrooms.

They said they were moved into the units about three years ago as a result of renovations being undertaken at the college, which to date had not been completed. They added that work on the renovations had been stopped a year ago and that they had had no feedback about completion.

A student, whose name is known to *Farmer's Weekly*, but commented on condition of anonymity for fear of victimisation, said the photographs of the college circulating on social media platforms were not a sufficient description of what they were subjected to.

"The beds we sleep on break, sometimes the food is rotten, we go for hours without water, or wake up and shower with ice-cold water. We get sick from the food, and when we ask for transport to go to a clinic, the management denies us the transport. We are left to fend for ourselves in this sickly environment," said the student.

"There have been multiple letters drafted to management, but to no avail. Our management simply does not care about the struggles we go through. However, they expect us to deliver the best academic results. To say that we are living in a slum is definitely an understatement," added the student.

Another student alleged that during a visit by Deputy President Paul Mashatile last month, the college was hastily cleaned up to impress him.

"We saw things we had never seen. The college hired rabbits and fish for the day. They also borrowed weed plants from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to impress the deputy president. The current dean of students doesn't care about students or that living conditions are bad and there is mismanagement of funds.

"An amount of R43 million was allocated for hostel accommodation renovations, but to this day the hostel is still not fixed," the student said.

After the protest, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development acknowledged the issues at Cedara and passed the blame onto the Department of Public Works.

According to the agriculture department, the renovation of the residence began in June 2021 and was supposed to be completed within 24 months. Addressing the issue of rotten food, the agriculture department said the catering company had since been suspended pending further investigations.

A committee had also been formed at the college to investigate and address the concerns raised by the students.

The Department of Public Works conceded that the renovations were left unfinished due to the contract with the service provider being terminated after the contractor allegedly failed to complete the work.

The Department of Public Works added that the process of replacing the contractor had already begun and a new service provider would be appointed soon.

New CEO for Agri SA

JOHANN KOTZÉ

Agri SA will have a new leader at the helm from October, with Johann Kotzé recently being appointed the organisation's new CEO. He will replace Christo van der Rheede, who currently holds the position.

Raised in a farming family in North West, Kotzé went on to complete a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economy at the University of Pretoria, a master's in Business Management and Administration, and an executive development programme at the Stellenbosch Business School.

He began his career as a farmer before becoming, in turn, an agricultural banker at Absa, a corporate banker in Mozambique, and an independent business consultant.

Kotzé returned to oversee Africa Agriculture for FNB, and since 2017 has served as the CEO of the South African Pig Producers' Organisation.

"Over the course of my career, I've learnt that South African agriculture commands global respect for its efficient farming practices," Kotzé said.

"As an agricultural community, we need to match the natural hope that South African farmers embody with pragmatic solutions to the complex challenges we face. Looking ahead, we'll have to challenge our thinking on what is realistically possible in the current business environment, and position agriculture to leverage partnerships in the broader business and international community."

Kotzé said that under current conditions, agricultural stakeholders should not act out of frustration, but collectively facilitate innovative solutions.

"The ethos and integrity of our structures need to create the necessary conditions and a culture receptive to change. Future sustainability is fundamentally a question of leadership," he said.

In a statement, Agri SA president Jaco Minnaar congratulated Kotzé and expressed excitement at the new phase ahead. He said Kotzé's appointment had come at a critical point in South Africa's trajectory.

"In the coming years, agriculture will have to navigate the combined impact of challenges such as climate change, deteriorating infrastructure, decaying service delivery, rural safety, shifts in global markets, and policy uncertainty. I believe that Kotzé is a creative leader with a passion for farming and the sustainability of the food system." – *Jyothi Laldas*

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Weather and war trigger volatility on grain, oilseed markets

Uncertainty was the name of the game on the international grain and oilseed markets in the first half of June. **Absa AgriBusiness** explores the reasons for this, and provides medium-term forecasts for these commodities.

The global grain and oilseed market experienced volatile movements in the first two weeks of June due to weather concerns in the US grain belt, an escalation in the war between Ukraine and Russia, and a steep increase in demand from China for these commodities.

MAIZE

Global maize prices were supported by dry conditions in the US in the first week of June, with analysts noting that 34% of the US maize belt had experienced dry conditions since 30 May. Forecasts suggest that US weather conditions will remain dry until the end of June.

In terms of global geopolitics, Russia has agreed to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative by two months, but delayed the registration of shipments moving from Ukraine's major port. This has created concern about global supply volumes.

Another factor adding to the volatility of the maize price has been an intensification of the Russia-Ukraine war, with the ongoing conflict seeing Ukraine's maize production estimates being revised downwards. Production estimates have also been lowered in Argentina, where drought has reduced yield. In contrast, Brazil's production prospects remain positive, as a bumper safrinha (second maize crop) is anticipated.

Given that this large Brazilian harvest and an anticipated improvement in weather conditions in the US after June should bolster global production, we expect that global maize prices will be under pressure over the medium term.

Locally, SAFEX maize prices increased in line with global prices during the first week of June, rising by 0,46% and 2,38% month-on-month (m/m) in the case of yellow maize and white maize respectively (*see Graph 1*).

Spot prices, however, were around 19% lower year-on-year (y/y). Local maize prices were higher in the second week of June due to a slight depreciation of the exchange rate.

WHEAT

In the first week of June, the global wheat price was supported by Black Sea grain supply concerns (as mentioned under maize) and crop damage caused by heavy rain in China's main wheat-producing provinces. Nonetheless, on 15 June, the price was 4,7% lower m/m.

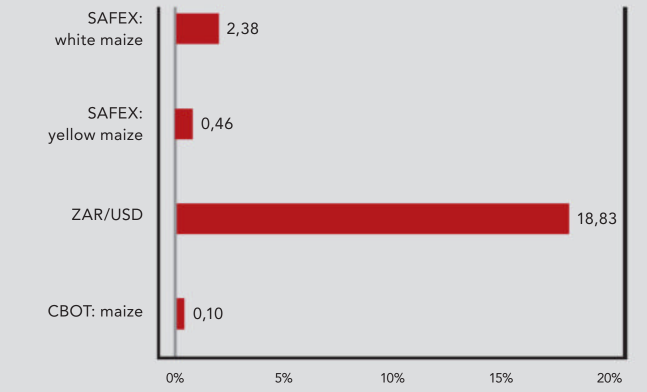
The Chicago Board of Trade's (CBOT) wheat prices remained under pressure in the second week of June due to a slight improvement in crop progress in the US, with the latest figure at 93%, ahead of the 87% five-year average. According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Crop Progress report, 61% of winter wheat was in good to excellent condition, 37% was rated fair and 6% was classified as poor. The global wheat price is expected to decrease in the medium term, influenced by declining global export quotes, US wheat price competitiveness, and US crop quality development.

The SAFEX wheat price was 0,97% lower m/m in the week ending 15 June, and is expected to hover around the R6 000 mark over the next three months, following the downward global trend (*see Graph 2*). Exchange rate movements will be key in giving direction to local prices.

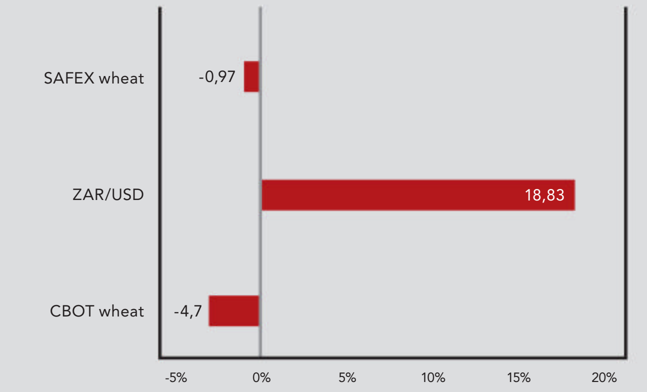
OILSEEDS

The global price of soya bean was supported by forecasts of dry weather in the US as well as substantial

Graph 1: Month-on-month price changes (%) in maize



Graph 2: Month-on-month price changes (%) in wheat



crushing figures: the USDA reported 187 million bushels crushed by processors in April.

Brazil and the US are expected to meet China's demand for soya bean; however, the two regions may see a decline in export rates.

According to the latest US Crop Progress report, there is a 96% planting percentage, ahead of the five-year average of 86%.

For the week ending 15 June, the CBOT soya bean price was 6,2% higher m/m, but 18,4% lower y/y.

We predict a downward trend in the price in the longer term due to high production volumes expected from Brazil and improving soil moisture conditions in the US. Global market movements will also be influenced by China's demand for soya bean and export rates from supplying regions.

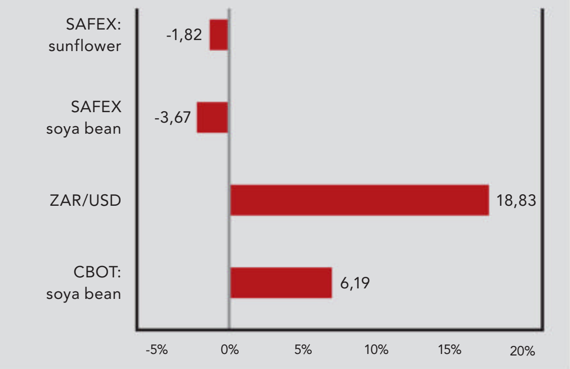
RUSSIA HAS EXTENDED THE BLACK SEA GRAIN DEAL BY TWO MONTHS, BUT DELAYED THE REGISTRATION OF SHIPMENTS, CREATING GLOBAL SUPPLY CONCERNS

After displaying volatility during the first half of June, the global sunflower oil price began to stabilise. Ukraine exported a large volume of the commodity in May, while Russia was seeking buyers for its high sunflower oil stocks. The Russian sunflower oil export tax was recently reduced to zero, adding to the bearish market sentiment.

SAFEX oilseed prices on 15 June were lower in the case of both commodites: the soya bean price was 3,7% lower m/m and 17,4% lower y/y, and the sunflower seed price was down 1,8% m/m and 21,6% y/y. This pressure on SAFEX prices, in contrast to global trends, was due to unchanged local supply volume forecasts (*see Graph 3*). A downward trend in prices is forecast in the medium term due to anticipated high production volumes both locally and globally.

Email Marlene Louw of Absa Agribusiness at marlene.louw@absa.africa. **FW**

Graph 3: Month-on-month price changes (%) in oilseeds



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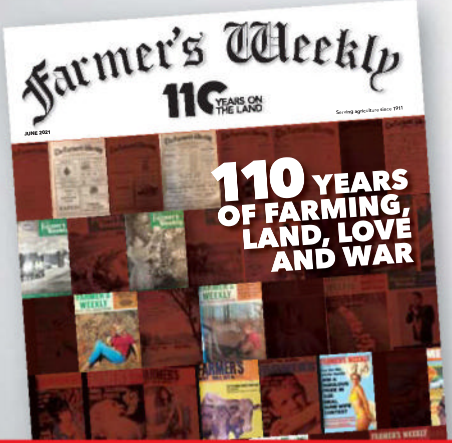

Solid defence: the secret of success in rugby and in business

Running a business is like playing rugby: you can barge in without a plan, but you do so at your peril. Strategies for attack and defence are crucial, with the latter arguably being more important, says **Peter Hughes**.

I admit it. I'm a rugby fanatic. I loved being part of the lower platteland leagues; I loved watching my sons on the field in their schooldays; and I am privileged to watch my grandsons playing at levels none of us ever reached!

Adding to my fascination with the game is that the skills required to lead and manage a rugby team apply almost exactly to managing and leading *any* team, on the field and off.

Time and again we see that it's the quality of leadership and management, not only the natural talent of players, that wins team sports.

Like so many other South Africans, I'm caught up in the prevailing national malaise of pessimism. So it has been a relief to enjoy the local Currie Cup competition, and to witness the depth of rugby player and leadership talent in this country.

While watching a recent match between the Pumas, my home team, and the Griquas, I saw how the men from Kimberley completely dominated for most of the first half, with close to 100% possession. But the Pumas defended tenaciously and, eventually, just before half-time, took the one opportunity that came their way and levelled the score.

LIKE LIGHTNING

I had a vivid, but vague, flashback. Somewhere, sometime, I'd seen this happen before. Eventually it came back to me: it was the South Africa vs Australia match during the 2011 Rugby World Cup at Regional Stadium, in Wellington, New Zealand, when they met in the quarter-finals. Despite being overwhelmingly dominant, the Boks had lost.

I retrieved the record of the match from the archives, and there they were, the mind-numbing statistics of that fateful game. The Boks spent 75% of the match in the Aussie half, and had 60% possession. Of the total of 200 tackles made, Australia accounted for 150!

But defence alone does not win matches! Points have to be scored, and when an opportunity was presented to them, the Aussies reacted like lightning, made a switch to attack, and put five points on the board.

The Springboks lost the match 9-11, and Griquas suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Pumas.

RISK MANAGEMENT IS UNGLAMOROUS, BUT THE PUMAS RECENTLY APPLIED IT TO BEAT GRIQUAS IN THE CURRIE CUP

Tenacious defence and a lightning switch to attack when the opportunity arose won the game for both teams. But the foundation was laid by superb defence.

TAKE HEED

There is a great lesson in this for us business managers, particularly those involved in the high-risk business of farming.

The exciting side of any farming business is the 'plan of attack'. Deciding which crops to grow; working out how to optimise production methods; choosing how best to market the produce; thinking up ways of adding value via processing, and all the rest.

It's these jobs, and others like them, that are the most fun, and have the 'glamour' in the business. But none of these would exist if the business collapsed due to factors beyond the control of management!

Long-term success in any competition, match, project, venture, enterprise or business depends more on the ability to defend than to attack. This includes effective defensive action that protects the organisation against risks such as bad weather, disease, fluctuating currency value, a government hell-bent on making life as difficult as possible, and much else.

Strategies dealing with these risks can keep a business alive, and applying these strategies is called 'risk management'. It's a mundane, unglamorous job, but it's one which saw the Wallabies give the Boks a wonderful lesson, and cost Griquas a semi-final slot in the Currie Cup.

MORE LESSONS FROM RUGBY

We have a feast of rugby of the highest standard and entertainment value coming up soon. July and August are taken up by international games between leading rugby-playing nations from both the Southern and Northern Hemispheres. Then, in France from 8 September to 28 October, we have the Rugby World Cup, with all its pressure and excitement.

I'll be watching most of these matches, looking for new management and leadership lessons, and to test my hypothesis that, while both attack and defence in business are vital, defensive strategy and execution are more important than attack. We'll see!

Peter Hughes is a business and management consultant. Email him at farmersweekly@caxton.co.za. Subject line: Managing for profit. **FW**

Livestock adaptability: what it is, and why it matters to a buyer

It's always best to buy sheep, goats or cattle that come from a similar environment to that of your own farm. If they are used to very different conditions, they could struggle and may even die, says **Shane Brody**.

I recently received an angry email from a farmer who wanted to know why his livestock, in this case Boer goats, had died after being imported from Namibia and South Africa. His point was that these goats were not as hardy as I had suggested in a previous column.

It's difficult to ascertain precisely why this particular farmer's goats died without better understanding how and where these goats were farmed.

Nonetheless, the first step for you as a buyer is to ensure that the livestock you purchase comes from a biome or climatic zone similar to the one in which you farm.

DRY VS WET CONDITIONS

To use goats and Namibia as an example, vast regions of that country are covered by bush, and the climate is generally dry compared with some other biomes in Africa, where grasslands often predominate, and heavy rain and wet conditions may be the norm.

Livestock adapted to browsing bushy plants in a dry desert biome will probably struggle to adapt to grassland grazing that may be wet for lengthy periods during the year.

Different regions and biomes present different challenges. Here are some important examples:

- **Different ectoparasites**

In South Africa, for instance, livestock from areas free of heartwater should never be transferred to areas where ticks that transmit heartwater are endemic.

'Blocking' techniques, where certain drugs are administered to newly introduced and unadapted animals, are available, but these don't always work and can result in the overuse of strong livestock medicines.

- **Different livestock diets**

Livestock accustomed to browsing certain bush species, and thus used to extracting specific nutrients from such vegetation, may struggle to suddenly adapt to grasses or bushes with a significantly different nutrient make-up.

Even cattle or sheep breeds that go from sourveld to sweetveld areas and vice versa can have a hard time adapting.

HUMID AREAS ALMOST ALWAYS HAVE MORE MOSQUITOES, FLIES AND TICKS THAN ARID AREAS DO

Livestock farming regions differ greatly, and farmers need to know which nutritional supplements are required for their particular area, as well as for the type of animals being farmed, as each type has its own nutritional and even drinking-water needs. For example, the Blackhead Persian sheep, which is typically farmed in arid biomes, requires far less water than the SA Mutton Merino.

- **Different weather conditions**

Humid farming areas will almost certainly have more disease-causing ectoparasites such as mosquitoes, flies and ticks than arid desert areas do.

Livestock used to a wet environment may have built up a level of resistance against debilitating conditions such as footrot, while desert animals may be highly susceptible to such conditions if suddenly placed in a humid region.

Different biomes often mean, too, that different internal parasites, such as wireworm, are more prevalent. Farmers need to be aware of the symptoms and know how to treat infected animals.

MEDICATING IN A HIGH-RISK AREA

Some breeders and experts suggest that the use of livestock medication or vaccines be reduced or even stopped altogether, as these may harm the inherent immunity of a flock or herd. But I have found it beneficial to use certain vaccines, dips and drench doses on livestock that I believe may be exposed to parasites (both external and internal) they are unaccustomed to. I recommend doing this particularly in a high-risk area, where livestock from unknown backgrounds mingle.

I usually dip and dose livestock at the change of the seasons, because different weather conditions trigger the emergence of different parasites.

MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT

The way in which livestock is kept can also affect their well-being. I have noticed that while sheep and cattle can be placed in feedlots, goats prefer open natural spaces. I have found feedlotting or kraaling them for lengthy periods can cause a number of health problems such as coccidiosis, lung infections, and scours (diarrhoea). Finally, if you have livestock from a different biome to your own, visit your local farmer supply store and buy injectable or drench dose trace element and vitamin supplements that can help the animals that may be suffering shortages of these essential elements.

Shane Brody is involved in an outreach programme aimed at transferring skills to communal farmers. Email him at farmersweekly@caxton.co.za. Subject line: Communal farming. **FW**

Protecting food security in the dry times ahead

The combination of good harvests and access to export markets helped the agriculture sector to register a cumulative real growth of 25% between 2020 and 2022. But, warns **Dr Sifiso Ntombela,** El Niño is looming.

South Africa has experienced relatively good growing conditions over the past three years. A La Niña weather pattern resulted in record crop harvests for commodities such as maize, sunflower, cotton and citrus, among others. The animal industries also benefitted from good grazing conditions.

The above-average rainfall since 2020 is in contrast to the projected below-average rainfall patterns from 2023 onwards.

According to some analysts, there are signs that South Africa is entering a (warm) El Niño cycle. This would be bad news for farmers and agribusinesses already battling with load-shedding and high input costs.

Between February 2022 and 2023, the local price of fertiliser and diesel increased by an average of 94% and 18% respectively, mainly due to global factors relating to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Rising input costs, load-shedding and other supply-side constraints have also elevated food prices on the domestic market. In May 2023, the average price of vegetables was 23,1% higher year-on-year (y/y), the average of bread and maize meal was 20,8% higher y/y, and eggs, milk and cheese were up by an average of 14,5% y/y.

REDUCED YIELDS

The expected El Niño conditions are likely to reduce yields, affecting the availability and price of food, which implies that more South Africans will be unable to afford food. It is estimated that one in four people is currently unable to afford food on a daily basis.

Poverty and food insecurity threaten people's livelihoods, increase the risk of disease, and fuel mass migration to cities. This in turn leads to health hazards and an increase in crime in urban areas, especially among unemployed youth.

All farmers need to be helped to improve local food production and exports, as well as moderate the rising costs of food in the country.

The announcement in her budget vote by Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Thoko Didiza of a R2,5-billion Agro-Energy Fund was a positive development. It should help to lessen farmers' dependency on Eskom by enabling them to invest in alternative energy technologies.

> **IT IS CRUCIAL THAT ALL POSSIBLE MEASURES TO IMPROVE FOOD AFFORDABILITY BE EXPLORED**

However, it is important that the department also consider initiating a support mechanism that will assist farmers to cope better with the projected drier conditions associated with the El Niño cycle.

FEED BANK

As part of preparing for drought, government, together with the private sector, could create an animal feed bank to protect the livestock of small-scale and vulnerable farmers in particular.

Stakeholders in the agriculture sector also need to upscale their efforts to open export markets and address biosecurity issues. This will enable farmers to export their produce, generate foreign currency, and build reserves that will be needed in the difficult periods coming with the El Niño cycle.

Government should also consider interventions to make food more affordable for consumers. For one, it needs to expand the list of VAT-exempt food products.

PUBLIC STOCKHOLDING

In addition, government should consider the feasibility of developing a local public stockholding programme; that is, a way to procure, stockpile and distribute food when needed

Such a programme could be linked to institutional markets and social security programmes as part of the mechanisms meant to safeguard food security and promote affordable food, provided it does not cause market distortions.

Stockholding policies are popular in Asia, where they are used to reduce food-price volatility.

Given that South Africa is a small player in the global food market, but that many local people live under the poverty line and survive on grants, it is crucial to explore all possible measures to improve food affordability.

Some of these measures require careful thinking to align with local market conditions. This being the case, the increasing cost of food and rising number of people living in poverty suggest a need to look beyond the traditional measures implemented in the country since the deregulation of the agricultural markets in 1996.

Dr Sifiso Ntombela is the chief economist for the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) and vice-president of the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa (AEASA). **FW**

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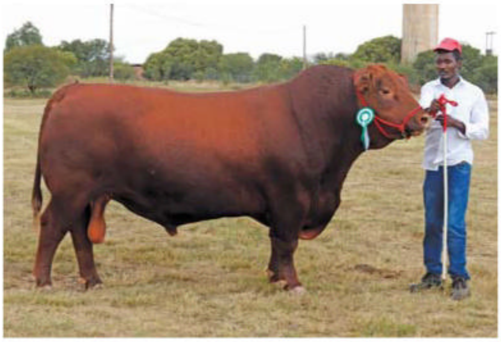
Hertzogville Show 2023

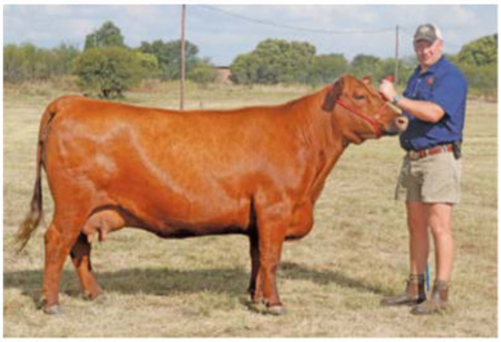
The Hertzogville Show was held on 17 and 18 March. There were six cattle breeds and 85 cattle on show, and 167 goats on show from seven breeders. Words and photographs: **Wayne Southwood**.

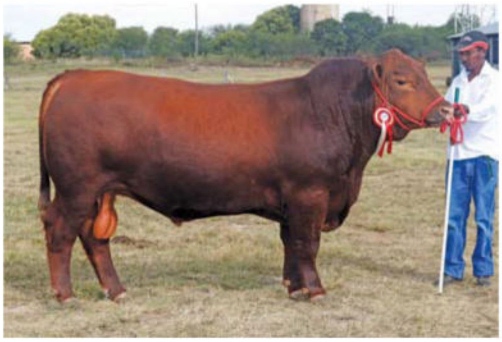
WESTERN FREE STATE ANGUS CHAMPIONS



LEFT:
Roechama Elevation RCM 19 088, Senior and Grand Champion Red Angus Bull and Supreme Champion Animal on Show, with Ishmail Mogorosi (handler). Owned by Gert, RC and André Malherbe, Roechama Angus Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 082 807 9216.

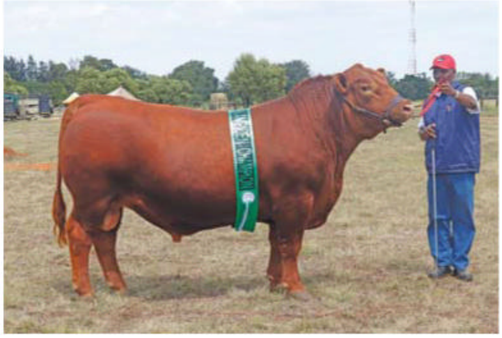
RIGHT:
Red Rubie Rubilicious RR 16 005, Reserve Senior and Reserve Grand Champion Angus Cow, with Rubie Redelinghuys (owner, Rubie Angus Stud, Heidelberg). Phone 083 535 7163.

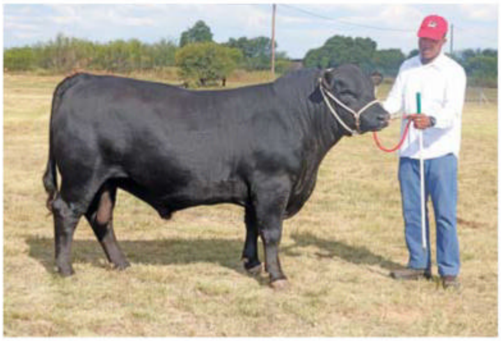




LEFT:
Roechama Maverick RCM 21 159, Red Angus Bull Calf Champion, with Stoela Papier (handler). Owned by Gert, RC and André Malherbe, Roechama Angus Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 082 807 9216.

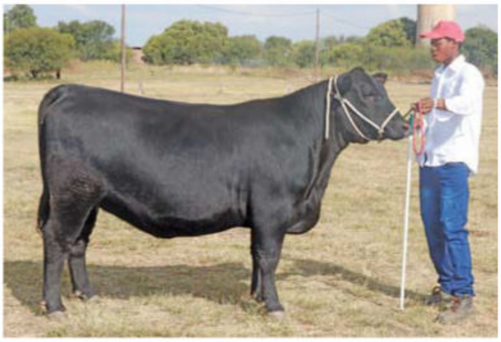
RIGHT:
Vansia Popeye JMS 20 310, Junior Champion Red Angus Bull, with Petrus Tshabalala (handler). Owned by Johan and JM Steyn, Vansia Angus Stud, Bothaville. Phone 072 408 5699.



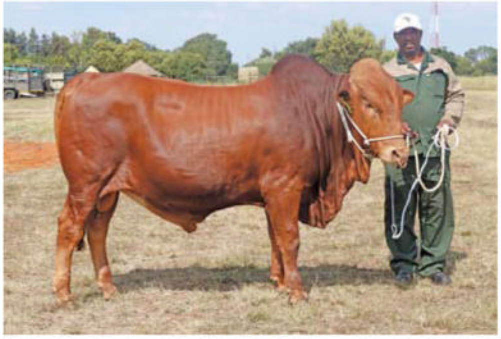


LEFT:
Roechama Lenny RCM 21 064, Junior and Grand Champion Black Angus Bull, with Jan Mogale (handler). Owned by Gert, RC and André Malherbe, Roechama Angus Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 082 807 9216.

RIGHT:
Roechama RCM 21 011, Junior and Grand Champion Black Angus Heifer, with Dodi Senze (handler). Owned by Gert, RC and André Malherbe, Roechama Angus Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 082 807 9216.

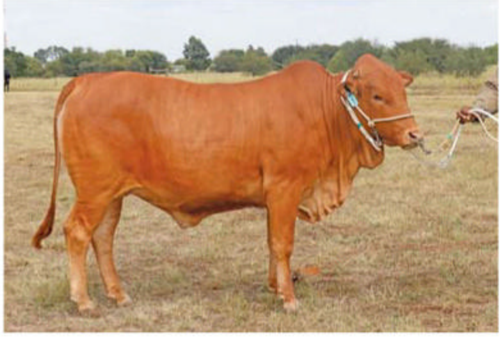


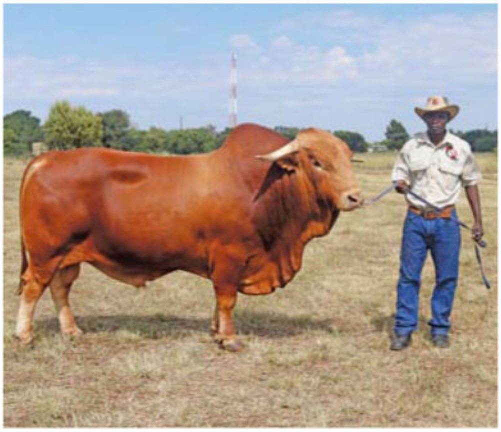
AFRIKANER CHAMPIONS



LEFT:
WH 21 910, Junior and Grand Champion Afrikaner Bull, with Petrus Mangoejane (handler). Owned by Martin Ras, Afric Afrikaner Stud, Hoopstad. Phone 082 492 9348.

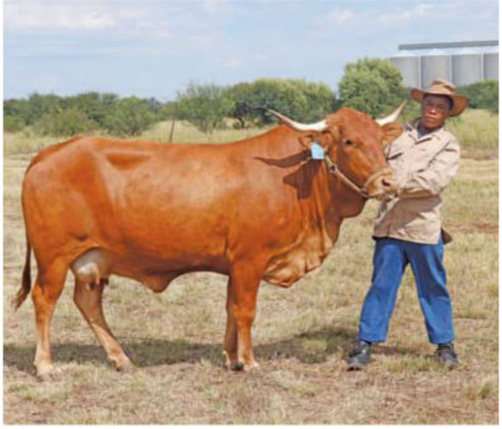
RIGHT:
Olienspruit MVG 21 001, Junior and Grand Champion Afrikaner Heifer. Owned by Myburgh Goosen, Olienspruit Afrikaner Stud, Hoopstad. Phone 072 454 8441.



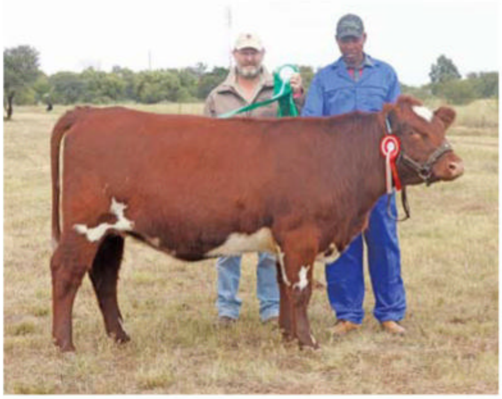


LEFT:
Esfané Pronk NW 18 017, Senior and Reserve Grand Champion Afrikaner Bull, with Amos Joe (handler). Owned by Nico van der Walt, Esfané Afrikaner Stud, Brandfort. Phone 082 550 2227.

RIGHT:
Esfané Henka NW 19 169, Senior and Reserve Grand Champion Afrikaner Cow, with John Maoke (handler). Owned by Nico van der Walt, Esfané Afrikaner Stud, Brandfort. Phone 082 550 2227.

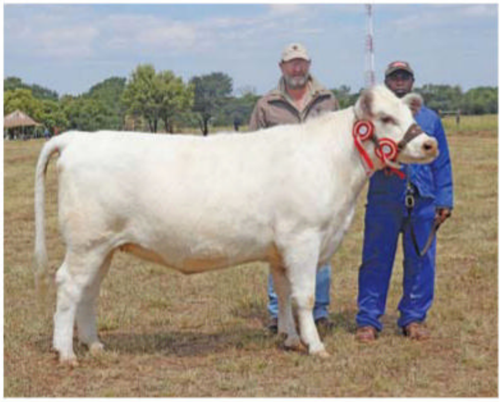


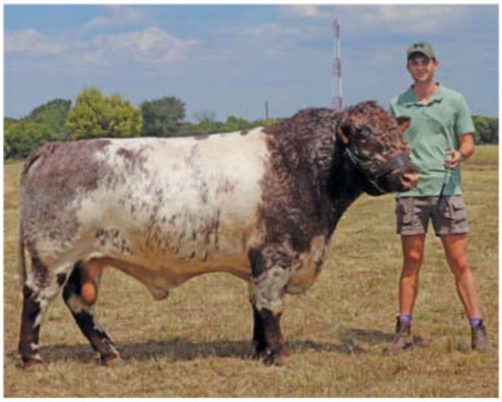
SHORTHORN CHAMPIONS



LEFT:
Brosterlea JGS 21 048, Shorthorn Toddler Heifer Champion and Interbreed Toddler Champion, with (from left): Barry Stretton (owner, Brosterlea Shorthorn Stud, Molteno) and Philyllis Bonmonwabile (handler). Phone 082 763 8611.

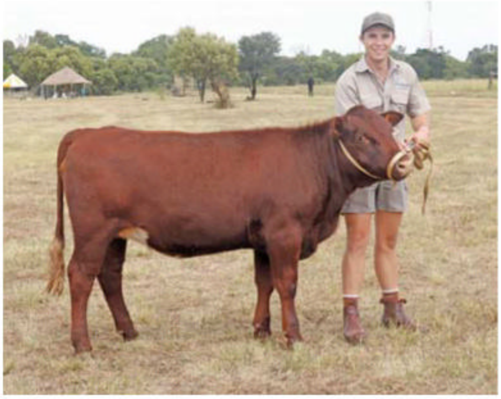
RIGHT:
Brosterlea Snowflake JGS 20 018, Junior and Grand Champion Shorthorn Heifer, with (from left): Barry Stretton (owner, Brosterlea Shorthorn Stud, Molteno) and Piekie Cothi (handler). Phone 082 763 8611.



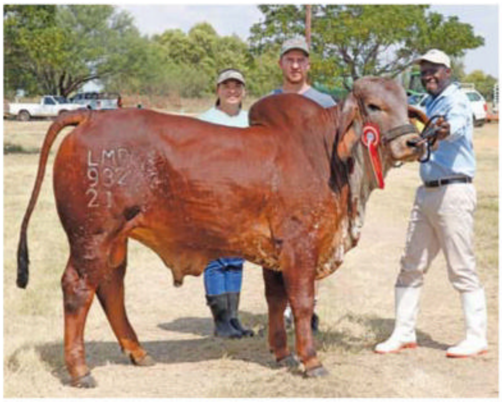


LEFT:
Amadeus Adam SZJ 19 039, Senior and Grand Champion Shorthorn Bull and Reserve Supreme Champion Bull on Show, with Henco Strydom (owner's son). Owned by Hendrick Strydom, Amadeus Shorthorn Stud, Petrusburg. Phone 073 289 5111.

RIGHT:
Amadeus SZJ 22 091, Shorthorn Heifer Champion, with Dirk Vrey (owner, Petrusburg). Phone 074 892 6009.

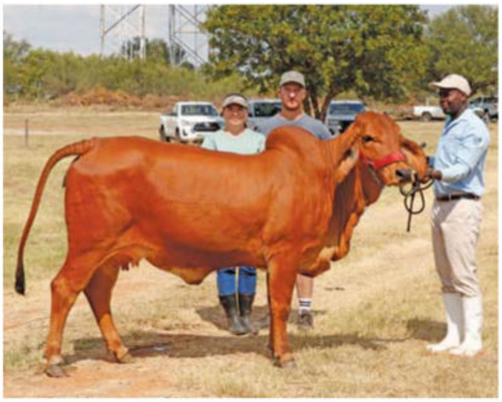


BRAHMAN CHAMPIONS

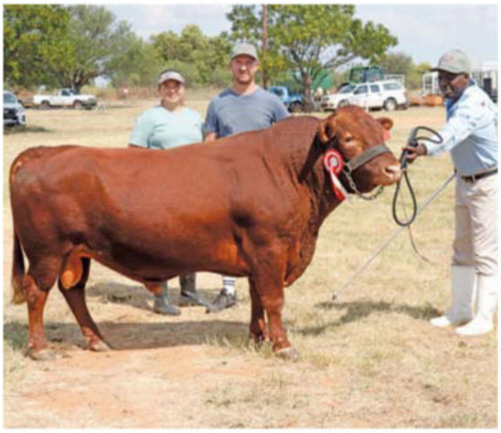


LEFT:
LMP 21 932, Brahman Toddler Bull Champion, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Brahman Stud, Delmas) and Kyle Ndlovu (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.

RIGHT:
JKL 20 048 Donnah, Junior Champion Brahman Cow, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Brahman Stud, Delmas) and Kyle Ndlovu (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.

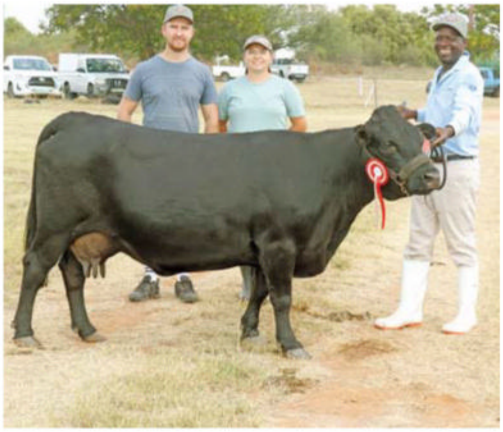


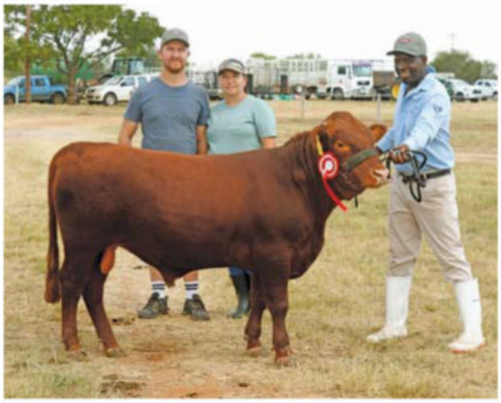
DEXTER CHAMPIONS



LEFT:
SD 15 001 Bakgat, Senior and Grand Champion Dexter Bull, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Dexter Stud, Delmas) and Kyle Ndlovu (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.

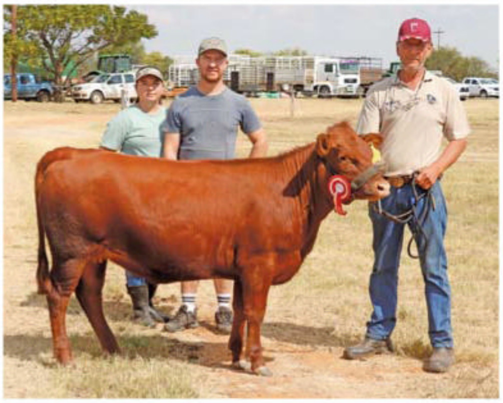
RIGHT:
FM 13 002 Juliet, Senior and Grand Champion Dexter Cow and Supreme Champion Dual-purpose Animal on Show, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Dexter Stud, Delmas) and Kyle Ndlovu (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.



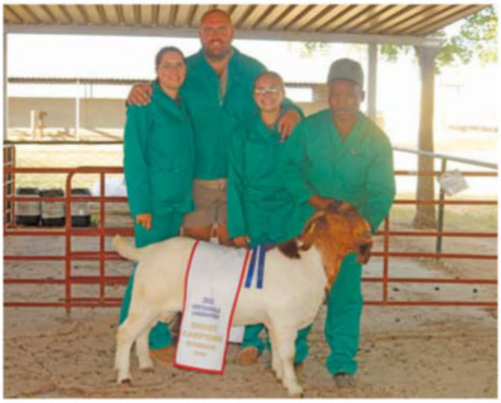


LEFT:
JCAL 21 018 Brisket, Dexter Bull Calf Champion, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Dexter Stud, Delmas) and Kyle Ndlovu (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.

RIGHT:
GDS 21 004, Junior Champion Dexter Heifer, with (from left): Sunja and Gert Davis (owners, Davis Dexter Stud, Delmas) and Dries van der Merwe (handler). Phone 076 560 9856.

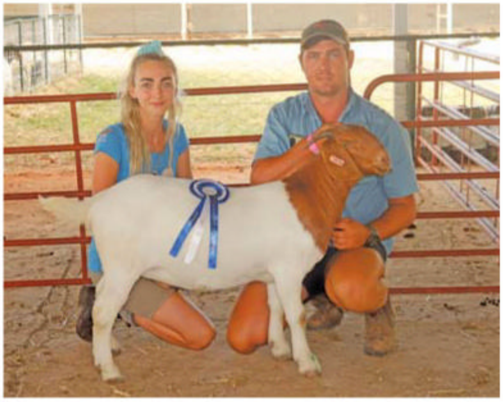


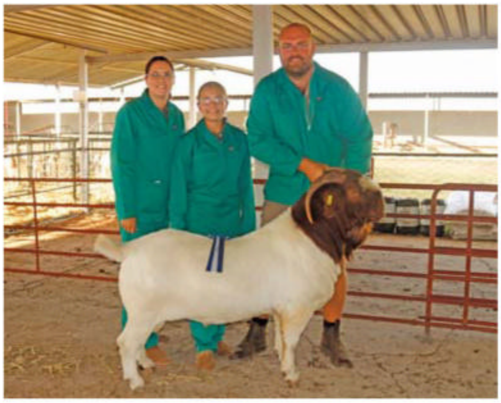
CENTRAL INTERIOR BOER GOAT CHAMPIONS



LEFT:
Junior and Grand Champion Boar Goat Ram and Breeder of Champions with (from left): Hildegarde Serfontein (owner's partner), Alec Fourie (owner, Rotsveld Boer Goat Stud, Krugersdorp), Mieke Fourie (owner's daughter) and Abel Modiakgotla (handler). Phone 082 375 2708.

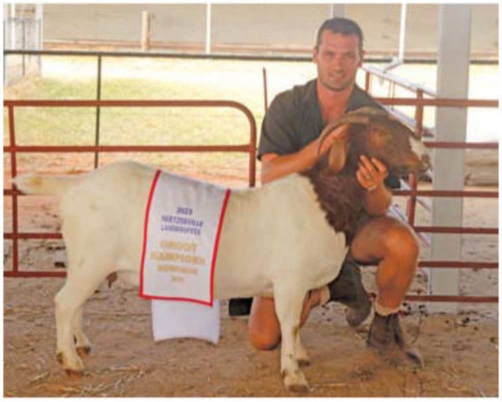
RIGHT:
Junior and Reserve Grand Boer Goat Ewe with (from left): Jumari Pretorius (owner's partner) and Jeandré Fouche (stud foreman). Owned by Andrew Roberts, Maize Valley Farm, Hoopstad. Phone 072 280 1211.





LEFT:
Senior and Reserve Grand Champion Boar Goat Ram with (from left): Hildegarde Serfontein (owner's partner), Mieke Fourie (owner's daughter) and Alec Fourie (owner, Rotsveld Boer Goat Stud, Krugersdorp). Phone 082 375 2708.

RIGHT:
Senior and Grand Champion Boer Goat Ewe with Kenneth Hamlet (owner, Knipmes Boerbok Stud, Bultfontein). Phone 073 051 7774.



SA MUTTON MERINO CHAMPIONS

LEFT:
SA Mutton Merino Ram Lamb Champion with (from left): Priscilla and Wouter du Plooy (owners, Winbold SA Mutton Merino Stud, Bultfontein), Danie (owners' son), Suané (owners' daughter) and Jafta Titties (handler). Phone 079 887 0123.

RIGHT:
SA Mutton Merino Wool Ewe Champion with (from left): Anja Haremse (owner, Bultfontein), Clara Harmse (owner's daughter) and Tshepo Masihleho (handler). Phone 073 234 8591.

LEFT:
Senior Champion SA Mutton Merino Ram with (from left): Suané (owners' daughter), Danie (owners' son), Wouter du Plooy (owner) and Zakarea Fakela (handler). Owned by Wouter and Priscilla du Plooy, Winbold SA Mutton Merino Stud, Bultfontein. Phone 079 887 0123.

RIGHT:
Junior Champion Mutton Merino Ram with (from left): Christo Goosen (owner's son) and Tsetse Taje (handler). Owned by Elsa Goosen, Waterpas SAMM Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 082 821 4214.

SUFFOLK CHAMPIONS

LEFT:
Senior, Grand and Supreme Champion Suffolk Ram with (back, from left): Linette (owner's mother), Johan (owner's father), Ané (owner's sister), Piet (owner's grandfather) and Johan Goosen (owner, Goosen Suffolk Stud, Hertzogville). Front: Hampie Moleme (handler). Phone 072 600 1935.

RIGHT:
Senior Champion Suffolk Ram with (from left): Leslé Malherbe (owner) and Kiewiet Lefu (handler). Owned by Gert and Leslé Malherbe, Gersuré Suffolk Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 083 410 9035.

LEFT:
Senior, Grand and Supreme Champion Suffolk Ewe with (from left): Leslé Malherbe (owner) and Kobus Tlahkudi (handler). Owned by Gert and Leslé Malherbe, Gersuré Suffolk Stud, Hertzogville. Phone 083 410 9035.

The fundamentals of sheepdog training

Sheep and cattle dogs play an essential role in many small-stock and livestock operations. **Janine Ryan** discusses how to get your dog training programme off to a smooth and confident start.

The image of a sheepdog herding a flock of sheep is synonymous with small-stock farming across the world. Herding dogs have been an essential part of livestock production since the late 1500s, according to historical records.

Sheep and cattle dogs are generally controlled using different whistles to indicate which action the farmer wants the dog to perform. While sheep and cattle dogs rely on instinct to herd animals, training is still required.

Andy Nickless has been training sheepdogs since 2002. He is based in Worcestershire in the UK, where he runs seminars for farmers on how to train their dogs.

Nickless says one of the first challenges farmers run into is the aggression of their sheepdogs when first faced with a flock of sheep.

"Farmers are often shocked [that upon] first encountering stock, [their] dogs turn from being sweet animals into rampaging 'killers'."

Not all dogs are this aggressive, he says, adding that aggression is not necessarily a bad thing: indeed, it is this hunting instinct that makes a dog a good herder. However, the farmer needs to be able to control the dog quickly and so limit injury to the stock.

"Getting the dog and sheep under control is probably the most difficult part of the process."

Farmers need to remember that their dog does not actually want to kill the stock. It's not a sign of a vicious temperament; it's simply a case of the dog's hunting instinct kicking in (where the dog sees the sheep as 'prey'). Once farmers understand this, training will become easier.

PATIENCE

Another difficult aspect of sheepdog training is moving stock away from fences or out of corners. Nickless says this, too, is due to the dog's hunter-prey instinct. "In an open field, the dog is king. But along a fence, space is confined."

By asking the dog to move stock away from a fence, the farmer is asking the hunter to confine itself among its prey. This goes against the dog's predator instinct, and explains why it is so difficult to train a sheep or cattle dog to move stock away from fences, out of corners, or out of pens.

Nickless also emphasises that training a dog to herd small stock or cattle is completely different to obedience or agility training, and farmers should not train their herding dogs with the same set of principles.

"Obedience training is often reward-based: when a dog performs the task, he gets a treat," he says. Stock handling is different.

"The best reward you can give a herding dog is to allow it to continue working."

Being taken away from the herd or flock once its instinct kicks in is the last thing the dog wants.

Essentially, the role of the farmer is to use the dog's predator instinct, but to temper it so that the farmer, dog and stock all benefit. This requires great patience and determination.

'IF YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ASSERT YOURSELF, YOU ARE GOING TO STRUGGLE TO CONTROL A CATTLE OR SHEEP DOG'

The most efficient sheep and cattle dogs are generally strong-willed dogs with a high 'prey drive', explains Nickless. But once they go into hunting mode, they are difficult to control.

To exercise proper control over the dog in the field, the farmer must have definite authority over the animal. "If you find it difficult to assert yourself, you're going to struggle to control a cattle or sheep dog," says Nickless.

Control, he adds, does *not* mean abuse. However, the dog must respect you as the authority. "When training a sheepdog, it also helps to be fit, as you'll have to move around easily during the training process."

When it comes to sheepdog breeds, Nickless says he prefers Border collies, bearded collies and Australian kelpies.

"There's a difference between 'pushing' stock and herding stock," he explains. "Even a Chihuahua can chase stock, but if you want a dog to gather stock, bring them to you, and perform other activities, you need an appropriate breed."

The hunting instinct in these breeds has been preserved over centuries of breeding, he adds.

FAST FACTS

A well-defined hunting instinct is an important determination of a dog's ability to herd stock efficiently.

At the start of a dog's training, the farmer may be taken aback by the dog's apparent aggressiveness towards the stock.

Stock learn very quickly that a calm dog can be calmly obeyed.

ABOVE:
The best way to reward a herding dog is to let it continue its work, says sheepdog trainer Andy Nickless.
PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

THE RIGHT SHEEP

When you start to train a dog for herding, it is important to choose the right sheep. This, says Nickless, has nothing to do with the sheep breed, but rather the sheep's experience.

Just as dogs see stock as prey, so stock see dogs as predators. Sheep unaccustomed to dogs will not take well to an untrained dog. At the very least, they will run away when an untrained dog enters the paddock. Most likely, however, they will panic and become uncontrollable.

"If the sheep scatter, it will become very difficult for an untrained dog to bring them back under control. Asking an untrained dog to manage the situation is like trying to teach a child to read using a complex legal document. It just doesn't work," says Nickless.

He adds that sheep quickly learn that a dog that approaches calmly can be obeyed calmly. However, they also learn that an unpredictable dog cannot be trusted; this causes panic among them, which further excites the dog, creating even more panic among the stock.

For this reason, says Nickless, it is easier to start a dog using 'dogged' sheep, in other words 'dog-wary' sheep that are used to having dogs among them. These tend to stay close together and not move at all, unless prompted to do so. They will help build the dog's confidence, and make it easier for the farmer to control the situation in the field.

Farmers who do not have dogged sheep on their farms should contact local sheepdog trainers or sheepdog trials competitors about using their dogged sheep, suggests Nickless.

If farmers cannot get hold of anyone with dogged sheep, they should try to find someone with a trained dog that can help sheep and dogs to become accustomed to each other.

Farmers should also be careful not to use sheep that are too 'dogged'. If the sheep develop a lack of fear for the dog, this can become a nuisance, and this can harm the confidence of an inexperienced sheepdog.

Nickless also advises against using aggressive sheep at this stage.

THE TERRAIN

When starting off, it is important to pick the training area with care. As mentioned, stock tend to run away from a dog, which they see as a predator. If you are in an open field, a trained dog will circle the stock and bring them closer to the farmer. In contrast, an untrained dog is likely to drive the animals further away. This is why Nickless recommends starting a dog in a confined space.

"When starting a dog, I like to use a space of around 16m in diameter. I use sheep hurdles, which are easy to move and install, and positioned in such a way that there are no corners," he says.

ABOVE: The Australian kelpie is a well-known and efficient herding breed.

BELOW: Cattle are more dangerous to herd, particularly with an untrained dog.
PIXABAY

BELOW RIGHT: When starting a dog, avoid aggressive sheep, says Andy Nickless. Ewes with lambs, for example, may be more aggressive than ewes without lambs.
PIXABAY

When escaping from the dog, sheep like to hide in corners or bushes. This makes it difficult for the dog, especially an untrained one, to control the sheep. For this reason, whichever area is chosen, it is very important that the sheep cannot find corners to hide in.

"Once the dog can control the sheep, you can move to an open field," says Nickless.

The farmer's responsibility is to control the dog and the stock: this is most easily done by having the dog close at hand.

"The closer you are to the dog [at this point of training], the more control you have over it."

When herding cattle, a sturdier enclosure is needed, and safety precautions must be considered.

"When I start a dog on cattle, I tend to keep the dog close in order to drive the cattle away from me. Only once the dog and cattle are used to each other will I go into an open field and have the dog bring the cattle closer to me."

This is because of the dangers involved in herding cattle, says Nickless. After all, a flock of sheep running towards you is far less dangerous than a herd of uncontrollable cattle.

RELAXED AND CALM

The dog's confidence is key to successful herding. If the dog is relaxed and calm when approaching the animals, they will respect the dog and be more likely to obey. If the dog is anxious, they will quickly pick up on this mood, and respond accordingly.

When starting a dog, it is important to become actively involved, says Nickless. "If the dog is struggling to bring the sheep or cattle to you, go and help it."

WHICHEVER AREA YOU CHOOSE FOR TRAINING, MAKE SURE THAT THE SHEEP CANNOT FIND CORNERS TO HIDE AWAY FROM THE DOG

If you leave the task uncompleted, the dog will learn that it can stop a task when it feels threatened, and the stock will learn that they can threaten the dog and avoid obeying a command.

It is also critical that farmers learn their commands thoroughly before starting a dog.

"You need to be fluent in your flank commands [when the dog is moving around its cattle or sheep in a circular fashion] when starting a dog," says Nickless.

He also recommends that, when beginning a dog's training, the farmer should use as few commands as possible to avoid confusing the dog or putting too much pressure on it.
Visit sheepdog-training.com. **FW**

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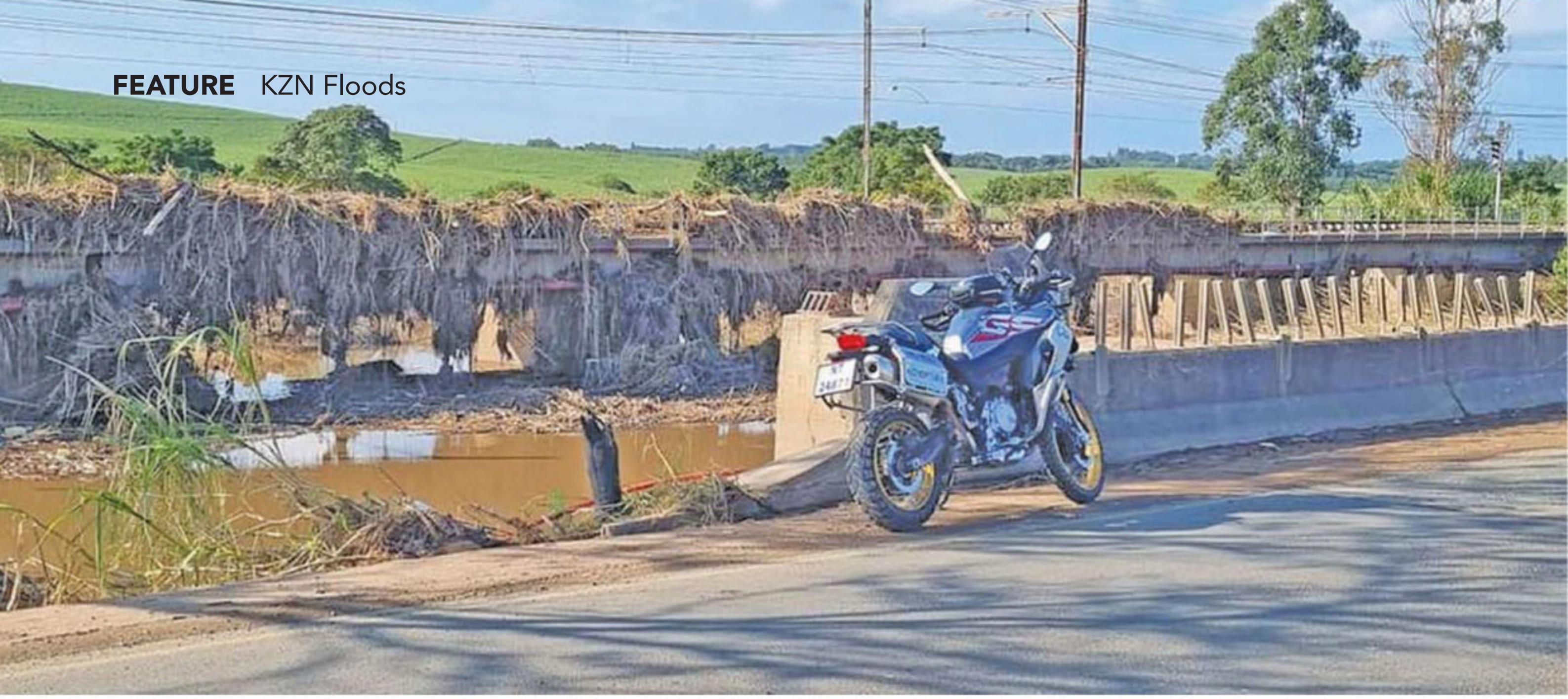


KZN farmers still reeling from the effects of last year's floods

The flooding in April 2022 has been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster yet recorded in KwaZulu-Natal, and farmers are still recovering from the destruction. **Jyothi Laldas** reports.

ABOVE: Sugar cane that washed away from fields was heaped on a bridge on the R102, a major transport route on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast.
PHOTOS: JYOTHI LALDAS

KwaZulu-Natal's farming community has been hit with a barrage of challenges since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. These began with pandemic-related restrictions in 2020, were followed by the anarchy and destruction of the unrest and rioting in 2021, and were succeeded in turn by the April 2022 floods.

The floods have been described as the most catastrophic natural disaster yet recorded in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) in terms of lives lost, homes and infrastructure damaged or destroyed, and economic impact, according to a study by researchers from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg and the University of Brighton, UK, published in the *South African Geographical Journal*.

On 11 April 2022, the KZN coastal zone, including the greater Durban area and South Coast, received more than 300mm of rain in 24 hours, which led to calamitous flooding and 459 people losing their lives.

Over 4 000 homes were destroyed, 40 000 people left homeless, and 45 000 people left temporarily unemployed. The cost of infrastructure and business losses amounted to an estimated R37 billion.

All parts of the province were affected by the rainfall, with the entire eThekwini metro and the districts of iLembe, Ugu, King Cetshwayo and uMgungundlovu being most affected.

Many of these areas are farmland, predominantly sugar cane fields, and these were all but destroyed during the flooding.

The impact of the floods saw President Cyril Ramaphosa declare a national state of disaster to deal actively with the fallout.

SEVERITY

Prof Stefan Grab from Wits University and his colleague from the University of Brighton, Prof David Nash, constructed a geographical history of flooding disasters in KZN, sifting through thousands of archived articles in old newspapers, colonial and government records, early missionary records, and meteorological records that became available from the 1850s onwards.

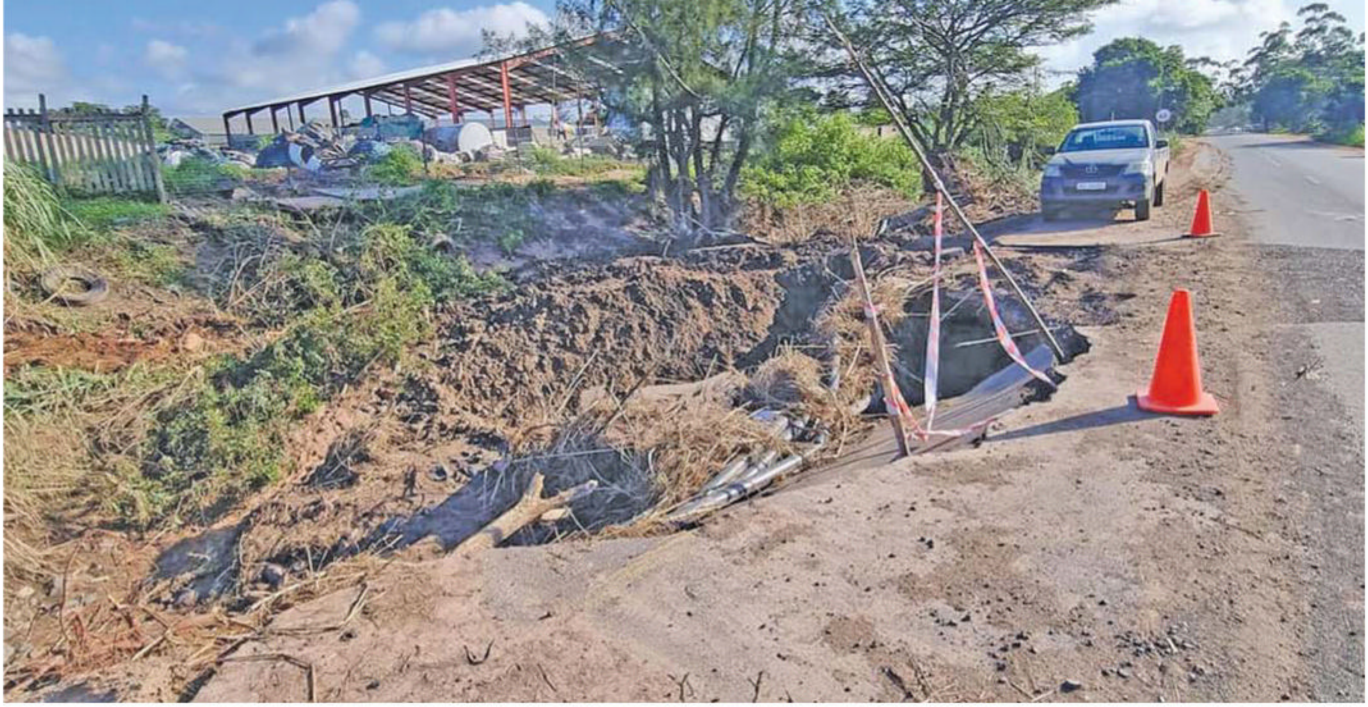
They defined extreme flooding events, where major rivers were overflowing their banks, together with one or more significant consequences, such as the loss of human life, livestock, agricultural fields and crops, and infrastructure damage to buildings, roads and bridges.

FAST FACTS

KwaZulu-Natal has suffered a series of calamities over the past three years, with rural communities suffering in particular from the floods of April 2022.

The floods destroyed more than 4 000 homes and left 40 000 people homeless.

A survey revealed that cane growers sustained extensive damage to cane fields and farm infrastructure.



The study, which reconstructed the history of floods in KZN since the 1840s, confirmed a widely held, yet anecdotal, view that the April 2022 floods were probably the most catastrophic natural disaster yet recorded in the province. Moreover, the number of floods had doubled over the past century or so.

"Right after the floods, many commentators like the media, some scientists and others were quick to report that the floods were the most severe ever recorded. Our aim was to place the floods into perspective and see if this and other statements related to the disaster were factually correct by building a historic geographic account of past floods and associated extreme rainfall events for KZN and particularly the greater Durban region," said Grab, lead author of the study.

'WITH THE SUGAR INDUSTRY FACING CHALLENGES, WE NEED TO DO ALL WE CAN TO ASSIST GROWERS TO REBUILD'

"With regard to flood disasters, history is repeating itself. We need to prepare for bigger rainfall events in our cities, and that doesn't just apply to Durban, but to all South African cities and towns. We must get our infrastructure, especially drainage systems, in order. It is urgent that we better prepare ourselves for the heavy rainfall and flood events that are guaranteed to come in times ahead."

CANE GROWERS DEVASTATED

A survey conducted by the South African Cane Growers' Association (SA Canegrowers) revealed that cane growers in rural areas of KZN sustained extensive damage not only to cane fields and farm infrastructure, but also to access routes that allowed growers to deliver their cane to mills.

Just over 300 growers reported that about 2 500ha of cane had suffered extensive crop and root damage, requiring the total replanting of these fields to bring them back into production. This damage amounted to an estimated R195 million.

Farm infrastructure to the value of around R28 million had also been destroyed, bringing total losses to R223 million, while a number of roads and bridges had been washed away. These included not only the main transport nodes to mills, but also access routes for farm inputs and workers.

TOP: A farm route on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast shows severe erosion.

ABOVE: This cane field was damaged extensively during the floods in April 2022.

"This catastrophic damage came just as many cane growers started to recover from the riots and arson attacks that took place in July 2021, which saw 554 000t of cane being burnt and R84 million in losses," Thomas Funke, CEO of SA Canegrowers, says.

He added that the floods could have been the final death knell for hundreds of cane growers and the rural livelihoods they supported, in particular small-scale growers, who were most at risk of not recovering from losses of this magnitude.

SA Canegrowers remained committed to working closely with government to ensure that critical relief was provided to growers affected by the recent catastrophic events, Funke says.

"With our industry continuing to face a number of challenges, including the influx of cheap imports and the health promotion levy, we need to do all we can to assist these growers to rebuild so they can continue to support the workers and communities who depend on them," he says.

FARMERS' BATTLE CONTINUES

A year later, many farmers are still struggling to emerge from the despair created by the flooding.

Nkosingiphile Nhlenyama is a small-scale cane grower near the Jozini Dam in the uMkhanyakude District in northern KZN. He farms a total of about 6ha and sustained damage to 2,5ha of sugar cane.

"I'm still waiting for help. I'm a small-scale farmer and I don't have the funds to clear the damaged cane and replant. The government was supposed to help us, but many of us are still waiting."

He says that due to his farm being on the banks of the dam, the cane had been severely damaged, which meant that he lost seven truckloads of cane during the last harvest.

"The cane was growing so well and the rain was good. My cane was ready to be harvested, but even before we could get to it, the floods came and we lost it all. All the cane dropped to the ground."

Nhlenyama says the land had remained waterlogged for a long time and he needed to hire a cane loader to remove the damaged cane, plough the land and replant. He was unable to afford this, however. "This requires a lot of money, and because of the losses I've sustained and continue to sustain, I can't afford to clear the land right now."

'THIS CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE CAME JUST AS CANE GROWERS STARTED TO RECOVER FROM THE JULY 2021 RIOTS'

He adds that he did not have a contingency plan to guard against future disasters of this nature, because of where the farmland was situated.

"We know the risk, but because of where we are on the banks of the dam, there's always a chance of flooding. But because we're small-scale and use the dam for irrigation, we have few options. We'll just have to deal with what comes when it comes," Nhlenyama says.

Khetha Halala Biyela, from the Obuka Reserve in the Edebe area in Mthonjaneni Municipality, is a chicken and vegetable farmer who has also faced adversity due to the floods.

"I developed a love for farming at a young age, but due to financial constraints I was unable to start farming and only got going in 2021. I'm currently producing vegetables on my homestead on a 1ha plot. Right now I'm harvesting sugar beans and I also have 1 200 growing cabbages and spinach. I'm expanding my farm with a 3ha plot, but now the problem is that I don't have fencing."

Due to the floods, she, too, is short of money. "The floods, followed by the excessively wet weather conditions, have affected my production negatively. Abnormally high amounts of rain leach nutrients from the soil and so the soil fertility has become vulnerable."

She says that to mitigate further disaster, she had used clean planting material to ensure low environmental impact in the event of more floods.

"I've also committed to building strong storage systems and setting boundaries to protect my plants. Drainage boundaries are one of the

BELOW: Khetha Halala Biyela on her farm in the Mthonjaneni Municipality. She cannot afford to remove her damaged cane and replant her fields.
AZOWEL PROJECTS

ABOVE LEFT:
Tomato production at an Azowel Projects tunnel in Maphumulo, in KwaZulu-Natal's iLembe District Municipality.
AZOWEL PROJECTS

ABOVE:
Welile Gumede examines a cucumber plant in one of her tunnels.
AZOWEL PROJECTS

main efforts I'd like to employ. However, I don't have funding to do much more right now."

She works with hand tools such as shovels and hoes, which is time-consuming and inefficient, but she hopes for assistance in the future.

RISING FROM ADVERSITY

On the KZN North Coast, 32-year-old single mother Welile Gumede, who owns Azowel Projects in Ashville, Madundube, in KwaDukuza, was also badly affected by the floods.

Gumede, who was dependent on her daughter's child support grant to survive, decided to take the plunge and use the grant money to farm with one tunnel in 2018. Through hard work and determination, her initiative flourished and she ended up with 40 hydroponic tunnels producing tomatoes, leafy greens and peppers that she supplied to resellers all along the North Coast. She was able to provide employment to 32 people and made an annual turnover of R1,6 million.

However, she was dealt a devastating blow when flood water battered the North Coast and she was forced to watch helplessly as her hard work was washed away. She was subsequently forced to stop operations on one of her farms.

While Gumede was in the process of rebuilding, albeit at a slower than desired pace, her plight came to the ears of Deputy Minister of Social Development Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu during the latter's visits to provide relief to families affected by the floods.

In response, the deputy minister, in partnership with MTN SA Foundation, reached out to Azowel Projects with a R1 million donation, half of which was sponsored by MTN.

Gumede has since moved to a better area in the iLembe region, where she has resumed operations growing cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes with 13 active tunnels, and is well on her way to recovery.

She says that with tunnel farming, crops are protected to an extent, so she hopes the move to a more favourable area would help in the event of further heavy rains.

Visit Azowel Projects at inslylabs.xyz/azowel. **FW**

Risk mitigation Part 4: the jackal and rooikat 'problem'

PJ Mommsen, a freelance risk mitigation strategist, speaks about the importance of managing risk as it relates to predators.

Without innovation and the creation or discovery of new solutions, many of the risks faced by the current generation of farmers will remain unmitigated, with the real possibility of these devolving into permanent, negative features of South Africa's farming landscape.

One such risk is predation by jackal and rooikat (caracal/lynx), which continues to result in huge losses for sheep farmers. The farming community in general, and sheep farmers in particular, have over the years gone to great lengths and spent countless hours and millions of rands in research, experiments and the application of mitigation strategies to deal with this issue. For example, a decade ago, between September 2012 and mid-January 2013, a total of 180 camera stations were set up on approximately 80 000ha, covering 17 sheep farms in the Laingsburg and Beaufort West districts of the Karoo. Thousands of kilometres of mostly gravel farm roads were travelled by the research team from the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town.

To set the scene for a discussion about the problems and costs confronting sheep farmers when faced with 'the jackal and rooikat problem', it is important to consider what is entailed in the loss of a sheep through predation. Importantly, calculating the total value must include costs such as the originating breeding or insemination costs, supplemental feeding of the pregnant ewe, animal health-care costs, lambing and rearing costs of the predated animal, grazing and water costs, all associated labour and energy costs related to the predated sheep, the future value of the mutton or wool of the now-predated sheep, other lost opportunity costs, loss of cash flow, and the time of the farmer or manager.

It is clear that considerable costs are involved in the loss of just a single sheep.

FAST FACTS

Predation remains a major issue for small-stock farmers.

There are considerable costs involved in the loss of just one sheep.

When it comes to risk mitigation in farming, there is no single solution, and farmers should consider risk strategies based on an individual basis.

EXTREME MEASURES

The 'black-backed jackal problem' in the Rosmead-Schoombee area in the Eastern Cape is now so serious that the local farmers have taken to the skies and are hiring helicopters and professional hunters to fly through the area hunting jackal. Yet, despite the introduction of this extremely expensive mitigation measure, together with regular hunts by day and night with night-sights and dogs, trapping, and the setting out of poisoned bait, predation by jackal and caracal continues to grow here at an alarming rate. Many farmers in the district seem ready to accept as a *fait accompli* that no solution for the 'jackal problem' exists, and that all possible solutions and interventions have been exhausted.

IT'S BETTER TO HAVE ONE, TERRITORY-BOUND LEOPARD ON A FARM THAN THREE OR FOUR BREEDING PAIRS OF JACKAL

It is worth remembering that, when it comes to risk mitigation in farming, there is no single silver bullet; there exists no one solution to address all the aspects associated with even just one risk such as predation by jackal and caracal.

Sustainable risk mitigation in sheep farming should be an ongoing focus of attention, where new ideas are continually added to the menu, then implemented and tested for the desired results.

As previously noted, the mitigation of risk, underpinned by a strong focus on innovative solutions, is the core theme of this series of articles. Allow me to throw my hat into the ring on the issue of the predation problem by presenting what is an extreme idea – leopards!

With regard to the risk presented by jackal and rooikat on and around sheep farms, the fact that the leopard has almost been removed from the Karoo ecosystem as the top predator lies at the heart of the problem. Mother Nature has filled the gap left by the leopard, replacing the spotted cat with jackal and rooikat.

Moreover, many decades of hunting and trapping have removed the genetics of the less smart canines and felines, leaving only the most cunning still breeding. The smartest jackal and rooikat now find themselves atop the food pyramid of the veld in much of the Karoo.

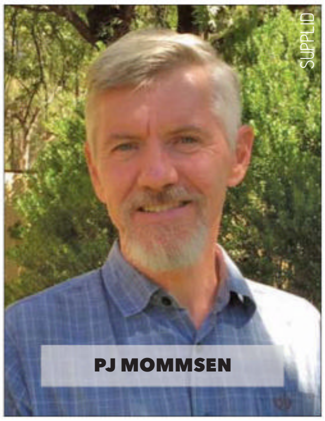
Has any sheep-farming district in South Africa tested the impact of the reintroduction of leopards on the following?

- Jackal and rooikat numbers;
- Predation by jackal and rooikat on sheep with leopard present in the district; and
- Predation on sheep by leopard.

From the perspective of the risk mitigation of losses of livestock through predation by jackal, the arithmetic is firmly in favour of leopards. Jackal become sexually mature at 11 months, gestate for 60 days, and produce litters of up to nine pups. The average mortality rate of jackal pups is a relatively low 40%, and those that survive into their second year can expect to have lifespans of between six and eight years. Leopards become sexually mature at 24 to 28 months but rarely mate before their third year, most often producing only one or two cubs.

The cub and juvenile mortality rate among leopards is high at 65%. In the wild, the lifespan of leopards is between 10 and 12 years. Hunting of leopards was only suspended in South Africa in 2016, and it remains listed as a threatened species.

It is better to have a single, territory-bound leopard on the property than possibly three or four breeding pairs of jackal, and any number of nomadic, sub-adults or single, non-breeding adults.



PJ MOMMSEN

RESTORING THE BALANCE

To my mind, the arithmetic around the choice of risk mitigation strategy is firmly behind the leopard, where its reintroduction into jackal- and rooikat-infested areas as top predator would see the numbers of the second-tier predators decline sharply, with the associated decrease in loss of sheep and other livestock due to predation.

Of course it would be imperative to ensure the overall health of the ecosystem, with sufficient numbers of primary, wild-prey species for leopard being available for the reintroduced top predator. Having regular patrols of fence-lines, grazing camps and lambing areas would also be vital. The reintroduction of leopards as a proposed mitigation measure requires much more serious research and testing by participating farmers, together with the rehabilitation of wild, unfarmed areas in farming districts.

Does the 'out-of-control jackal problem' warrant the further investigation of this seemingly drastic mitigation measure?

A number of farms in the Nieu-Bethesda area in the Karoo follow a different jackal control

BELOW:
Jackal are now on top of the food pyramid of the veld in many Karoo areas.
PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

strategy that is part of a broader, holistic approach to farming based on the re-establishment of balance within the ecosystem. There is at least anecdotal evidence to support the further investigation, research and documentation of the 'no hunting, no shooting' policy towards jackal and rooikat, as this approach is reported to have delivered dramatic reductions in predation on sheep and lambs by these two species.

RIGHT: The fact that leopard have almost been removed from the Karoo ecosystem as the top predator lies at the heart of the predation problem.

ENSURING FOOD SOURCES

Another strategy that has reported success is prohibiting staff from hunting with dogs on farms. The thinking is that if the numbers and variety of the wild and preferred prey species of jackal and caracal, such as hares, ground squirrels, meerkat, rodents, reptiles, insects, birds, young antelope, and even certain fruit in the case of jackal, are left undisturbed, the predators will have no need to target domestic livestock, as their traditional food sources will be plentiful.

The counter-argument is that predators will always select 'easier' prey, with energy conservation and lower risk of injury being the two key motivations: sheep are slower than spring hares and not armed with dangerous, piercing horns, as are most antelope species.

Supporting the approach of 'less shooting, and more research', in an interesting article titled 'Superdogs', the author Don Pinnock, after field-research and interviews with experts involved in 'pest-control' programmes, came to the following conclusion: "We now have a sheep farmer's worst nightmare – a predator which thrives on persecution. By fast-tracking natural selection, we've produced a superdog." (*Africa Wild Forum*, 19 June 2021.)

BELOW: Farmers need to implement a predator risk mitigation strategy to prevent losses of sheep to predators. PIXABAY

Further investigation is warranted to follow up and document if and how these alternative risk mitigation strategies are working.

HUNTING WITH DOGS A BIG THREAT

Yet another scourge has emerged, which, if left unchallenged, has the potential to become an even greater problem than jackal and caracal predation: a cultural tradition among the Xhosa of hunting with dogs for both the pot and for sport. There have been reports of hunters travelling from the Transkei to the Karoo with up to 40 hunting dogs and returning home with bakkie-loads of small game. Local Karoo communities reportedly place bets on the achievement of various hunting feats. Greyhounds, whippets and other breeds of racing dogs are used, with springbok being a highly prized target species.

Since communal land in South Africa has long since been stripped of all game, it is only a matter of time before private landowners will come face-to-face with this new threat. How long will it be before sheep, lambs, goats and other livestock fall as casualties in what could become an unregulated craze among communities living as neighbours to our farming districts?

'Management-by-walking-about' was once a popular method of keeping one's finger on the heartbeat of a business. Short of erecting 2,5m-high, solar- or generator-powered, double-reinforced electric fencing at the cost of a small farm, it appears that the only feasible mitigation strategy to combat predation, illegal hunting, poaching and other unwanted, uninvited visitors to the farm is twice-daily physical patrols of high-risk areas on horseback, carrying a licensed firearm, and accompanied by trained security dogs.

Email PJ Mommsen at veldfirst@gmail.com. Read the full Centre for Social Science Research report at rb.gy/cmmox. **FW**

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How to handle agrochemicals safely

At a Vineyard Workers' Development course held recently in Paarl, **Rosa Kruger** and **Trix Quixley** spoke about the importance of the safe and responsible handling and use of agrochemicals. **Glenneis Kriel** reports.

ABOVE: Workers and farmers should always wear the correct protective gear when handling agrochemicals.
PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Each year, there are reports of farmers who suffer losses because of the incorrect use of agrochemicals. This can be due to using the wrong products, such as when a herbicide is mistaken for a pesticide, or the incorrect use of the right product, according to Rosa Kruger, founder of the Vineyard Workers' Development Trust.

Kruger says using the wrong product can wipe out an entire orchard or vineyard. Incorrect use of a product can cause financial losses by failing to protect crops against pests and diseases, or having a negative impact on plant growth, yield and product quality.

Using incorrect dosages, or the overuse of products with the same active ingredients or from the same chemical group, can also result in pests, diseases or weeds developing resistance to specific chemical groups, leaving farmers with fewer management options.

The incorrect use of agrochemicals can be harmful to the environment, causing leaching into water systems or destroying beneficial insects, such as bees. It can also be dangerous to human health. For example, people may suffer from ailments if they ingest or inhale a product, or their skin, eyes and sinuses may be affected.

Moreover, health problems might only appear later in life, due to repeated exposure, when the damage is already done and there is little that can be done to reverse the problem.

Trix Quixley, technical manager responsible for vineyards and berries at NexusAG, says many older agrochemical workers have serious health problems today because they once worked with dangerous chemicals without using any personal protective equipment (PPE).

Most of these dangerous chemicals have been banned or are in the process of being phased out. The use of PPE is now also mandatory and enforced by industry bodies and certification systems such as the Integrated Production of Wine, and the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association.

Not adhering to prescribed withholding periods or using the wrong product may also negatively affect the safety of a product for consumption. When it comes to grapes, this is monitored by doing pesticide residue analyses of the fruit at harvest; grapes containing unacceptable levels are not used for consumption.

THE LEGISLATION GOVERNING USE

Quixley defines an agrochemical as any product that protects plants or crops, such as an insecticide, a fungicide or a herbicide, or improves plant health, such as a fertiliser, foliar feed or plant growth regulator.

She adds the South African National Standard (SANS) 10206:2010 governs the way in which agrochemicals are to be handled, stored and disposed of.

People who work with agrochemicals have to attend regular training to ensure they are equipped to do their jobs safely. They also need to be literate so they can read the labels and usage instructions on products.

In addition to displaying names and usage instructions, a label should indicate the chemical composition of the product, a physical description of it (for example, whether it comprises a fluid, powder or granules), the withholding period, the expiry date and the level of toxicity.

Agrochemicals should be stored in their original packaging, with the label intact. To prevent confusion, labels must be repasted if they fall off; they should not be replaced with handwritten notes.

Products should be used before their expiry date. Farmers should therefore inform their agrochemical supplier about what they have in storage so that these products can be incorporated into their crop protection plan before new products are bought.

Disposing of expired products can be costly, as it can only be done by specialist companies. The contents of containers without labels should be analysed for identification to ensure they are disposed of correctly.

In addition, empty product containers need to be disposed of correctly.

"Wash canisters out at least three times, punch holes in them, and store them in a safe place. No empty agrochemical containers may be used to store food, water or animal feed. Various recyclers are available to remove used containers safely from the farm and dispose of them," says Quixley.

Agrochemicals are colour-coded and classified into five groups based on their toxicity, from green (unlikely to cause any harm) to red (extremely toxic).

"Not all chemicals are equally dangerous, but even those classified as safe could be harmful if used irresponsibly," cautions Quixley.

She adds that workers should use the labels to double-check themselves, particularly if the product specified on the spray instruction seems to differ from the product in hand.

Farmers should not use their own initiative when working with agrochemicals, says Quixley; it is better to ask an agrochemical adviser whether a particular product is suitable for an application, or how to substitute one product with another to avoid mistakes.

FAST FACTS

By law, farmers have to supply workers with the right-sized personal protective equipment.

It is workers' responsibility to wear and use the equipment correctly.

Employees should not smoke, drink or eat while working with agrochemicals.

ABOVE: From left: Nadia Haifer (founder member of the Vineyard Workers' Development Trust), with the speakers at one of the organisation's course days: Trix Quixley (technical commercial manager at NexusAG), Jaco Geldenhuys (crop adviser at NexusAG), and Rosa Kruger (founder member of the Vineyard Workers' Development Trust).
GLENNEIS KRIEL

PROPER USE OF PROTECTIVE GEAR

By law, farmers have to supply workers, even those who only mix or hand out the products, with the right-sized PPE. These include raincoats, hats, rubber gloves, overalls, face masks, rubber boots, aprons, safety goggles and respirators, depending on the level of danger presented by a product.

Workers, on the other hand, should take responsibility for wearing these, and doing so correctly. "The gear might seem like overkill, or be hot and uncomfortable, but it's your responsibility to ensure that you stay safe and healthy in the workplace," Quixley warns.

The wearing of PPE is also required when working with organically certified products, such as copper, sulphur and plant extracts. "Plant extracts might be organic, but they can still be harmful," she says.

PPE have to be cleaned after each use, preferably in a dedicated area with a washing machine solely for this purpose. It should not be washed at home, where it may contaminate other clothing or material. Washing should take place as soon as possible after usage to prevent agrochemicals from being absorbed by the clothing.

To prevent clean PPE from absorbing chemicals, it should be stored away from any agrochemicals. It should also be checked for holes and tears before each use and replaced if needed.

Staff should not eat, drink or smoke while working with agrochemicals, whether they work with the chemicals themselves or hand them out at the farm's agrochemical storeroom.

"Wash your hands and face before you eat or drink anything. Don't even think of taking a quick smoke break in between spray applications or in the storeroom. This is not only to avoid accidental inhalation, but also because many of these products are flammable," says Quixley.

ABOVE: Chemical run-off can pollute farm dams and other water resources.

People should wash their whole body with soap and water after spraying or mixing agrochemicals.

She adds that nobody should be allowed in an orchard or on a land after a chemical application has been made. The re-entering time may range from a few hours to a few days, depending on the product.

The pre-harvest interval (the minimum time that elapses before a product is safe to be harvested after application) should also be considered when selecting a product to use. Using a certain agrochemical too close to harvest may result in the market rejecting the product.

STORING HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS

The way in which chemicals are stored, as well as the place where they are stored, has to conform to legislation (SANS 10206:2010). Typically, chemicals are stored in a well-ventilated building constructed out of bricks and concrete. The building should also have enough fire extinguishers, with the number required depending on the size of the building.

By law, red-label or toxic products should be locked up separately to keep them safe. Kruger says it is also good practice to separate herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and other agrochemicals to prevent mistakes: "The chances of a herbicide being mistaken for a pesticide or fertiliser are lowered by doing this."

No petrol, oil, fertiliser or animal medicines are allowed in the agrochemical store.

Products may not be stored directly on the floor; they must be packed on shelves or pallets that have been treated to prevent chemical absorption, or covered with a layer of plastic inserted between the product and the shelf or pallet.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE CLEANED AFTER EACH USE AND STORED AWAY FROM AGROCHEMICALS

None of the products stored in the agrochemical store may be taken home or used for domestic purposes. Quixley explains that agrochemicals are specifically formulated for agricultural use; chemicals formulated for domestic purposes are generally less harmful and are used at different dosages.

Records should be kept of which product was used when, as well as how much was used. This should be cross-referenced with what was applied and the volumes prescribed by an agrochemical adviser.

TREATMENT IN THE CASE OF POISONING

A person who has been exposed to agrochemicals and shows any symptoms, such as headaches, dizziness or nausea, should receive medical attention as soon as possible. "The sooner they are treated, the better," says Quixley.

Contaminated clothing should be removed and the affected person turned on his or her side to ease breathing and prevent vomit from being swallowed. The victim should also be kept warm and not given anything to eat or drink, as this might exacerbate the situation.

The label of the product to which the person was exposed should be read carefully for first aid instructions, and this information given to the doctor carrying out the treatment.

Email Trix Quixley at trixq@nexusag.co.za, or Rosa Kruger at rosa@myvine.co.za. **FW**

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The leaves of the turnip grow directly from the above-ground shoulder of the root. PHOTOS: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

VEGETABLES

The basics of growing turnips

Turnips are an ideal garden vegetable. In South Africa, they are best grown as a cool season crop for harvesting during early spring.

The turnip (*Brassica rapa*) is a root vegetable rich in vitamins A, C, B, B6, E and K. The leaves are sometimes eaten as 'turnip greens'.

The common type of turnip is mostly white-skinned, apart from the upper 1cm to 6cm, which protrudes above the ground and is purple or red or greenish where sunlight has fallen on it. This above-ground part develops from stem tissue, but is fused with the root.

The interior flesh is entirely white. The root is roughly globular, 5cm to 20cm in diameter, and lacks side roots. Underneath, the taproot (the normal root below the swollen storage root) is thin and 10cm or more long; it is often trimmed off before the vegetable is sold. The leaves grow directly from the above-ground shoulder of the root, with little or no visible crown or neck.

The best time to plant turnips is in March and early April so that the plants can strengthen before the winter cold sets in and the first frost arrive. Turnips can tolerate moderate frost; indeed, as *Gardening in South Africa* (GSA) notes, many people say their flavour improves with colder weather. If, however, you are in an area with severe frost, use straw as a mulch to protect the roots from freezing.

In subtropical regions, turnips are grown from February to June during the winter months. In cooler summer regions, they are planted in August and September and harvested before the peak summer heat, which can spoil them.

CULTIVATION

Turnip seeds can be sown directly into garden beds, or started indoors in seedling trays and transplanted later. They prefer a sunny location with well-drained soil.

"To prevent misshapen or stunted crops, dig the beds over thoroughly, breaking down all hard clumps of soil and removing all stones," suggests GSA.

Dig compost into the bed and add a dressing of organic 2:3:2. Turnips are adaptable to most soils, but the ideal soil pH is 6,5.

Turnips prefer a firm seedbed. Make shallow furrows about 1cm deep and about 25cm to 30cm apart. Sow the seed thinly, cover with soil and water gently.

The seeds germinate within three to 10 days. Thin the seedlings out after about two weeks so that there is about 10cm between the plants.

If necessary, carry out a second thinning two or three weeks later.

"Water your plants regularly, as any sudden lack of water will spoil the texture of the roots," cautions GSA.

If you prepare the soil correctly, turnips should not require any additional feeding. For the best results, however, apply a light dressing of organic fertiliser high in nitrogen in the initial stages of growth.

HARVESTING

Turnips are a fast-growing vegetable and will be ready to harvest in two to three months, when they are about the size of a tennis ball. (Bigger is bitter, not better, warns GSA.) Because the roots push out of the soil, it is easy to see how big they are.

> ***'WATER YOUR PLANTS REGULARLY; ANY SUDDEN LACK OF WATER WILL SPOIL THE TEXTURE OF THE ROOTS'***

"Don't heap the soil up against the roots as they mature, and don't leave turnips in the ground for too long or they will become coarse and stringy," advises GSA.

When harvesting turnips, leave some of the leaves on the plant so that it can continue to grow.

Turnip leaves (for turnip greens) can be harvested from six to eight weeks, as long as the plant is strong enough and the roots are developing well, says GSA. Remove only the outer leaves so there is enough foliage left to keep the plant growing and the roots developing.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Caterpillars, particularly those of the cabbage white butterfly, eat holes in the leaves. Pick them off by hand or spray with an organic insecticide for chewing insects, says GSA.

Turnips are known to repel aphids, but they can sometimes be attacked when conditions are favourable and if turnips are grown in single, large beds. Fortunately, they can be controlled easily with an organic spray.

Roots with brown marks and cracks indicate a boron deficiency, which is usually caused by extremely alkaline or newly limed soils.

The flavour of the turnip may change slightly when cooked, going from mildly spicy to sweet, nutty and earthy.

COOKING

As with many other root vegetables, the flavour of turnips changes slightly when cooked, going from mildly spicy, to sweet, nutty and earthy. Cooked turnips turn soft and velvety.

"Use turnips as you would most root vegetables, like sweet potatoes or beets. Baked, boiled, mashed, steamed or roasted, turnips taste great," says GSA. 'They're delicious sautéed or steamed as a side dish with garlic, onion, olive oil and lemon, or as an addition to soups, stews and pasta.

Blend cooked turnips with leeks and chicken broth for a silky, smooth soup. "Mashed together with potatoes is another creative and satisfying way to make comfort food for the cold winter months," adds GSA.

- *Source: 'Turnips –* Brassica rapa*'. Gardening in South Africa. bit.ly/3r5jnxZ.* **FW**

A GOOD COMPANION

Companion planting involves growing different crops close together to help with pollination and pest control, provide a habitat for beneficial insects, and maximise the use of space.

Turnips are excellent companions for many vegetables, helping them to grow even better.

They are also natural aphid repellents, protecting a wide variety of garden crops that are vulnerable to aphid invasion. Squash, tomatoes, celery, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, beans, onions, garlic, lettuce, Swiss chard, spinach, cauliflower, and radishes all flourish when planted interspersed with turnips.

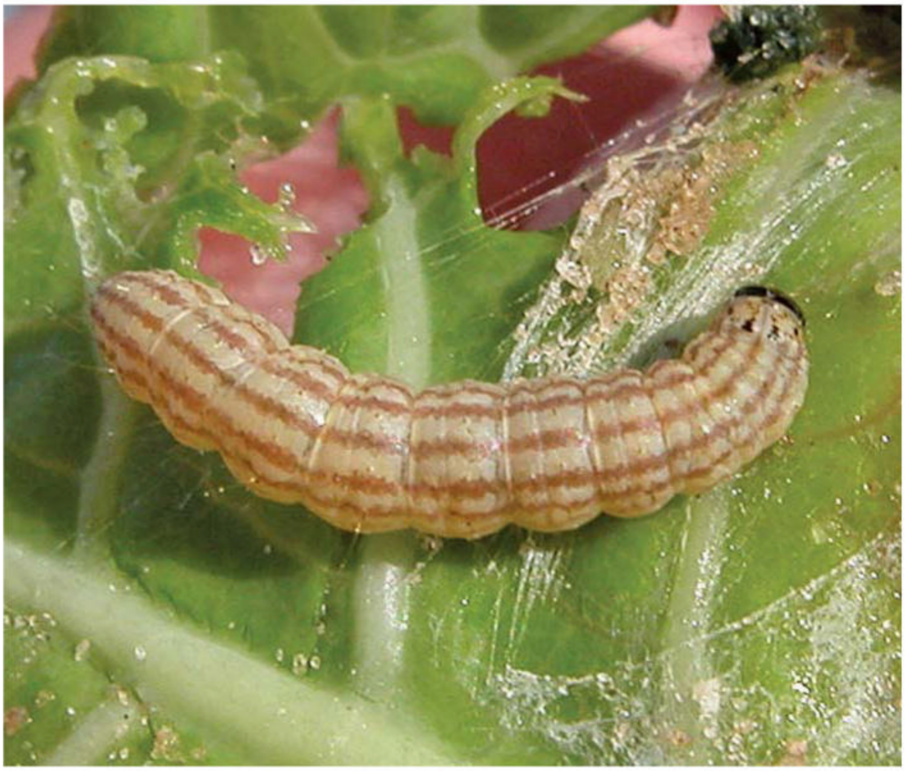
Turnips go well with nitrogen-fixing peas.

Companion planting does not mean that crops will never be attacked by insects, cautions GSA. There will be times when you have to spray to save your crops, so have organic sprays on hand.

If you do need to spray, follow the instructions carefully and spray only those areas that require spraying, not the entire vegetable patch.

Dealing with sporadic caterpillar pests in cabbages

They may not always be present in your lands, but you still have to look out for these pests, or risk losing your cabbages, says **Bill Kerr**.



The caterpillar of the cabbage webworm has distinctive brown stripes along the length of its body. Note the silk, which is used to bind leaves together to form a protective covering. ENT.UGA.EDU

Continuous pests are those nearly always present in your lands, and need regular control. Sporadic pests are migratory, cyclical, or occasional pests that require control once in a while.

Very often, sporadic pests are preyed on effectively by a particular insect. This causes cycles where the parasitoid wasp, or other insect, reduces the pest population to a level where the predator population also drops, as there are not enough pests to feed on. This enables pest numbers to increase again in a see-saw effect.

PLUSIA LOOPER (*THYSANOPLUSIA ORICHALCEA*)

This pest, an example of a semi-looper, is an example of a sporadic cabbage pest. I recall once finding a mature plusia looper feeding on a cabbage. On its back was a small black parasitoid with its ovipositor inserted; the parasitoid was clearly laying eggs into the caterpillar.

When the wasp flew off, I placed the caterpillar in a box, and from time to time would open the lid to check on it. I noticed that its body looked as though it were filled with miniature grains of rice seen through the skin.

One day, I opened the box to find that it contained hundreds of newly hatched parasitoids. For one parasitic wasp to produce so many offspring was a clear indication how effective it was in controlling this pest.

T. orichalcea, like all semi-loopers, arches its back while walking, bringing the rear legs to the front legs before the front legs move forward, hence the name 'looper'.

The caterpillar can be identified by light green colour, while the night-flying moths are dark grey with a distinct yellow/golden blotch on each wing. They can be seen taking flight after being flushed from leaves when you walk through the land.

That said, you will rarely encounter this pest, and need only spray when they are detected in the land. Preventative spraying is not required.

CABBAGE WEBWORM (*HELLULA UNDALIS*)

Another sporadic pest of the cabbage family is the Oriental cabbage webworm. When farming in a subtropical area which would occasionally receive light frosts in winter, I saw this pest only in the warmer months.

The caterpillars are slightly lighter in colour than a ripe banana skin, and have parallel brown longitudinal stripes along the body. The head is black.

BEFORE LONG, THE GROWTH POINT WILL BE EATEN AND THE PLANT WILL BE UNABLE TO MAKE A HEAD

As the name 'webworm' implies, the caterpillars spin a web, binding together leaves under which they can feed in safety.

In young transplants, which it prefers, the caterpillar often bores down from the growing top into the stem. Before long, the growth point will be eaten and the plant will be unable to make a head. *H. undalis* is usually not much of a threat to older plants, however.

This pest is not easy to control, as it attacks the area near the growing point and also tunnels into stems and the midribs of leaves.

In my experience, the most effective way to control it is to use a knapsack sprayer and spray mevinphos onto the growth point.

Bill Kerr is a vegetable specialist and breeder. Email him at farmersweekly@caxton.co.za. Subject line: Vegetable production. FW

Rafale: Conquering new horizons

Renault makes its next move into the 'large car' customer segment with the daring, eye-catching All-new Rafale Coupé SUV.

ABOVE: Ready to assert its power and personality on the road: the All-new Renault Rafale. SUPPLIED

Now that Renault has revamped its arsenal of technology for hybrid powertrains and electronic equipment, it could no longer deprive its customers of a vehicle born and bred for driving pleasure, or deprive the brand of a new flagship. The All-new Renault Rafale is both.

Designed by Gilles Vidal, head of design at Renault, the Rafale ushers in a new era. It is visionary, daring, perfectly in tune with its time, and tailor-made for a period when everything is moving ever faster and only *avant garde* models will stay attractive throughout their life cycle.

The All-new Renault Rafale also features up-to-the-minute connectivity and a 149kW E-Tech full hybrid powertrain that is as efficient as it is frugal and uses recycled materials.

It was born to take driving pleasure to ever new heights, and is enhanced with technological breakthroughs that rank it high up in the high-performance automotive universe.

Renault has crafted the vehicle round optimal driving pleasure, but not the self-centred kind: pleasure that the driver enjoys alongside passengers in a 'car for life and living'.

The All-new Renault Rafale is a gratifying SUV coupé. It looks as vibrant as it feels when you drive it, and it is an opportunity to share an intense driving experience with your friends or kids, however grown-up they may be.

BELOW: The All-new Renault Rafale is the first production vehicle entirely designed according to the new visual language that Gilles Vidal has brought in as head of design at Renault.

There are several AI-powered capabilities inside the All-new Renault Rafale, and they are all there to help the driver and passengers.

In many cases, the system proactively makes suggestions: for instance, to switch off the air-conditioning if a window is open or to switch it on if it is too warm inside.

These proactive recommendations are based on 'routine' patterns that the AI system picks up and analyses as time goes by.

The Rafale's running gear combines a multi-link rear axle with the latest upgrade to the 4CONTROL Advanced four-wheel-drive system.

Multi-link suspension enables the most efficient settings for road-holding without hampering comfort. It also muffles more of the noise from the undercarriage.

The 4CONTROL Advanced four-wheel-drive system significantly improves handling at low speeds, and boosts agility and vigour at average and high speeds.

REAR-WHEEL STEERING

When you negotiate a turn at less than 50km/h, the rear wheels turn very slightly (up to 1°) in the same direction as the front wheels, reducing the rear wheels' inertia and improving the car's stability.

At low speeds, the rear wheels turn up to 5° in the opposite direction, providing unrivalled agility and shortening the All-New Renault Rafale's turning radius to 10,4m (the same as a city car).

"The All-new Renault Rafale is central in the Renaulution, symbolises our move upmarket and shows that we belong in every customer segment," said Fabrice Cambolive, CEO Renault brand, at the launch.

"With its captivating coupé-SUV design crafted for intense experiences, it provides unprecedented driving pleasure with its hybrid powertrains and a standard-setting chassis brimming with passion and know-how from Renault engineers."

The All-new Renault Rafale E-Tech full hybrid will reach markets in spring 2024. *Visit renault.co.za.*

Curry with potato, apple, peanuts and chickpeas

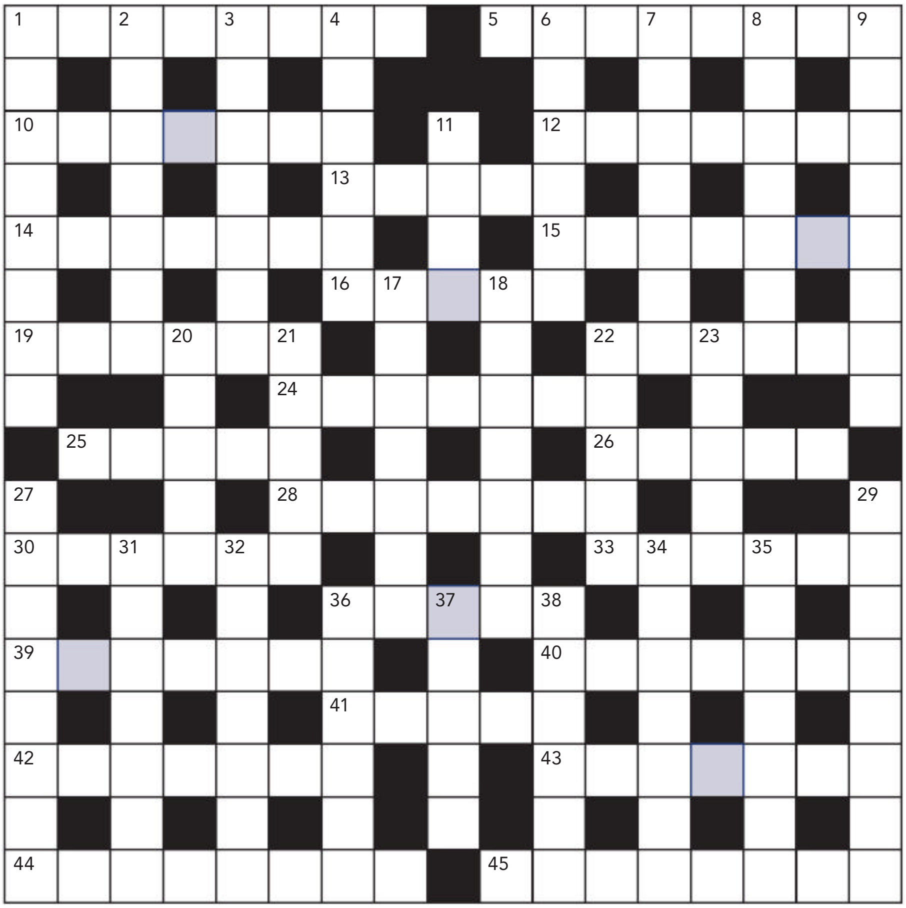
A hearty dish ideal for winter. As it stands, this delicious curry is a vegetarian dish, but you can easily add chicken pieces for some extra protein and texture. **Recipe and photograph: Tru-Cape**.

MAKES FOUR

500g waxy potatoes
1 eggplant
2 onions
2 cloves garlic
3 Tbsp sunflower oil or ghee
2 tsp cumin seeds
1 Tbsp masala curry
1 tin of tomato purée (70g)
400ml coconut milk
1 vegetable stock cube
1 tin of cooked chickpeas (400g)
15g fresh coriander
1 lime
1 apple
50g roasted peanuts

- Peel the potatoes and chop them into 3cm pieces. Chop the eggplant into pieces of the same size.
- Finely chop the onions and the garlic.
- Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion for about 3 minutes. Add the potato, eggplant and cumin and fry everything together for a further 3 minutes. Add the garlic and curry and cook for another minute.
- Stir in the tomato purée and add the coconut milk. Crumble in the stock cube and bring to the boil. Put a lid on the pan and leave to simmer gently for 15 minutes.
- Rinse the chickpeas in a sieve. Chop the coriander and cut up the lime. Roughly chop the peanuts. Slice the apple thinly.
- Stir the apple pieces and chickpeas into the curry and season with salt and the juice from one lime segment. Warm for a further few minutes.
- Serve the curry in large bowls with a lime segment and sprinkle with the peanuts and fresh coriander. **FW**

Crossword 515



ACROSS

1. A hot capsicum pepper (8)
5. Animated; lively (8)
10. Food items preserved in vinegar or brine (7)
12. A semi-liquid food made from fermented milk (7)
13. Sturdy breed of sheep originating on an island of the Netherlands (5)
14. Leaf vein (7)
15. Of a vehicle, not loaded (7)
16. Material with which jeans are made (5)
19. Spike on which to cook pieces of meat (6)
22. Decay of timber and plants caused by fungi (3,3)
24. Destruction of environmental aspects necessary to life (7)
25. West Indian tree also called wild mango (4)
26. Horse-riding gear (4)
28. General atmospheric condition of an area (7)
30. Beat maize to separate out husks and straw (6)
33. Wandered (6)
36. DNA constituents that determine individuality (5)
39. A decongestant camphor yielded by oil of peppermint (7)
40. Item (7)
41. Fruit of the oak (5)
42. Globulin produced by plants of the pea and bean family (7)
43. To reduce or exhaust (7)
44. Any plant, such as *Artemisia*, which reputedly can be used to treat intestinal infestations (8)
45. Large pots or hanging baskets (8)

DOWN

1. A ________ garden is formal with rocks, bridges and raked gravel (8)
2. Alfalfa (7)
3. Contaminate (7)
4. Prepared a structure for egg-laying (6)
6. Broad taxonomic category of the animal kingdom (6)
7. Occurring at set intervals (7)
8. Sound caused by electrical discharges in the atmosphere (7)
9. Cause to explode (8)
11. Common domestic cattle and other bovine animals (4)
17. Tends to wear away due to weathering by wind, water, ice, etc (7)
18. Copy the actions or look of (7)
20. The _____ ant is also known as the termite (5)
21. Stretch of river between bends (5)
22. Put off or prevent someone from taking an action (5)
23. Caribbean name for cassava (5)
27. Rain channelled down the trunk of a tree (8)
29. Laziness (8)
31. One who goes back on a promise (7)
32. Plans of action (7)
34. Unyoke oxen so they can rest (7)
35. Heavy South American knife used as a tool or a weapon (7)
36. See briefly (6)
37. Midday (4)
38. A fine-grained and fragrant Indian wood (6)

MYSTERY WORD

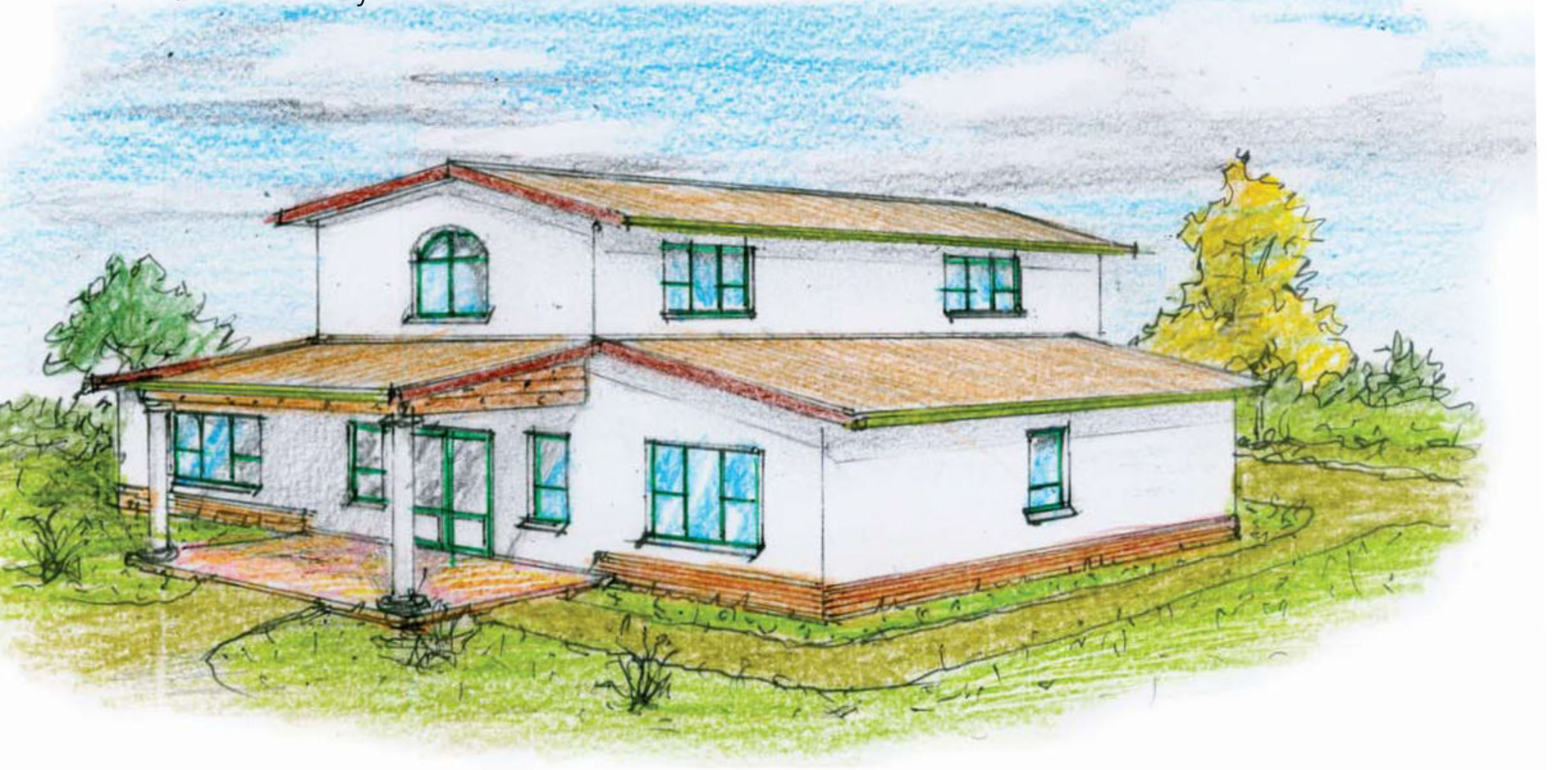
__ __ __ __ __ __

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 510: 9 JUNE 2023

ACROSS: 1. Rainfall; 5. Chow-chow; 11. Ginseng; 12. Chester; 13. Steak; 14. Loofah; 15. Fishes; 16. Earth; 19. Task; 23. Addo; 24. Explain; 25. Aspic; 26. Idyll; 28. Kraaled; 30. Cork; 32. Spur; 35. Berry; 38. Silage; 39. Market; 40. Breed; 42. Oatmeal; 43. Rancher; 44. Sidestep; 45. Bactrian.

DOWN: 1. Regulate; 2. Igneous; 3. Foetal; 4. Logs; 6. Hock; 7. Weevil ; 8. Hatched; 9. Workshop; 10. Shear; 17. Appease; 18. Trailer; 20. Kapok; 21. Gecko; 22. Snide; 23. Abyss; 27. Scissors; 29. Brethren; 31. Related; 33. Pak choi; 34. Egrets; 36. *Rheum*; 37. Walnut; 40. Blue; 41. Drua.

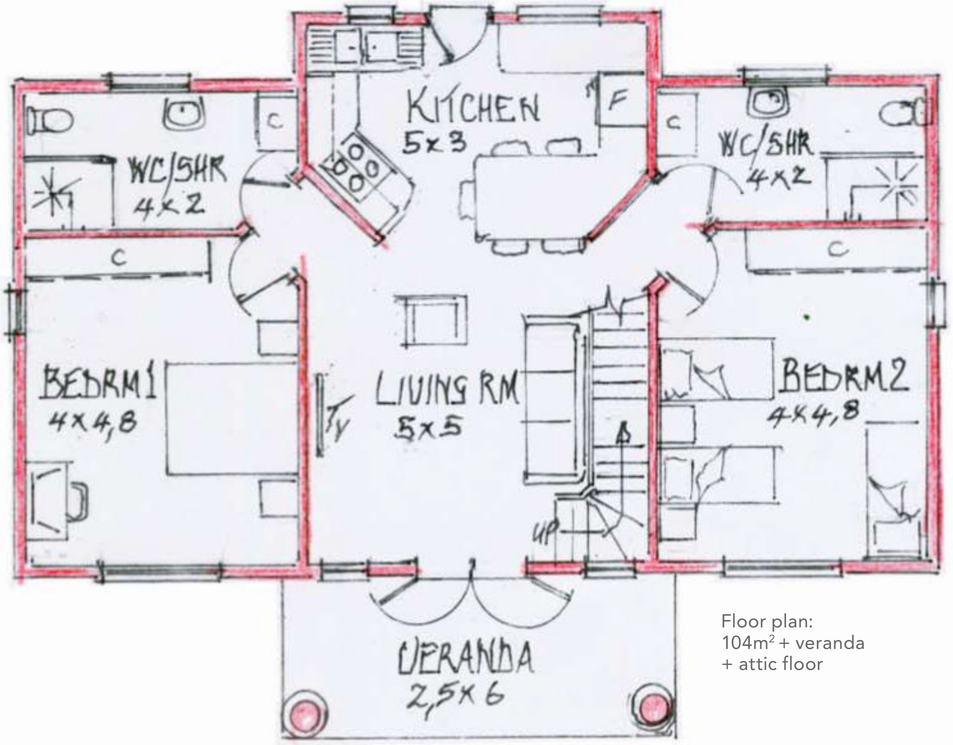
MYSTERY WORD: Ginkgo



A pleasing, affordable home built in stages

Mike in Limpopo phoned me to say he had seen one of my *Farmer's Weekly* articles featuring a home that could be built in stages, and asked me to design something similar for him.

The house he has in mind must be easy to build and affordable. He requires an open-plan living/kitchen area that can also serve initially as a sleeping area. Two en suite bedrooms will be added later as finances allow.



Floor plan: 104m² + veranda + attic floor

Dear Mike,
Thank you for your call and explanation. As you can see, the sketch shown meets your requirements.

I suggest, however, that the central living area be built with raised outer walls and an attic area added. This could accommodate two bedrooms and a bathroom and toilet, and would come at very little extra cost.

The ground-level bedrooms can be added thereafter one at a time.

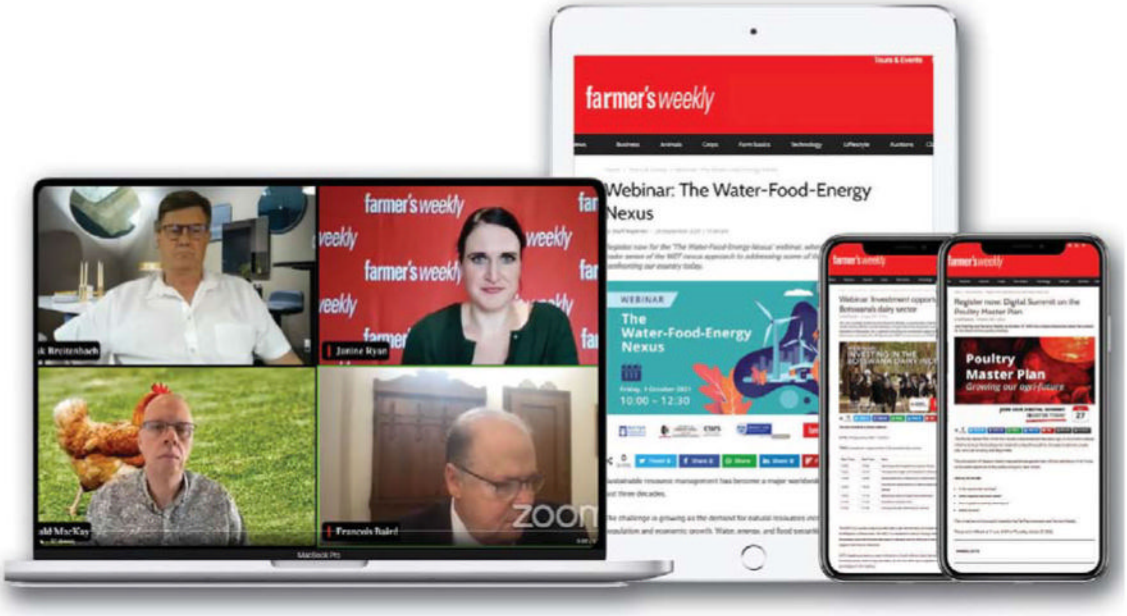
Building in stages is a money-saver, particularly when compared with the cost of taking out a loan. What you save on interest could be put into construction materials.

If you were to build the additions yourself, you would enjoy more cost-savings.

I've tried to design a simple yet aesthetically attractive home. In your final working drawings, I'll include all the technical details, along with further cost-cutting tips.

I look forward to hearing your comments. Please give me a call, and we can discuss any further ideas you may have.
Kind regards,
Jonno **FW**

Jonno Smith is a registered architect. Email hillbilly@eca.co.za or visit hillbillyhomes.co.za. Please provide details of the proposed development.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Droughts are old news

When the good rains come and the frogs come out, it is easy for people to forget the poverty and misery that intensely dry periods have brought over the centuries, says **Roelof Bezuidenhout**.

In 1949, the traveller, researcher and author, Laurence Green, noted in his book *In the Land of the Afternoon* that there was something about South Africa's weather and climate that fired controversial discussions and inspired scientists. He based his observation on articles, writings and other publications about the country's meteorology dating back to 1885.

But even long before that, according to Green, many were already convinced that South Africa was drying up. The reasons for this included deforestation, particularly the destruction of trees such as the wild olive. This was said to have led to the disappearance of fountains. Overgrazing was also blamed for changes in vegetation and ensuing climate change.

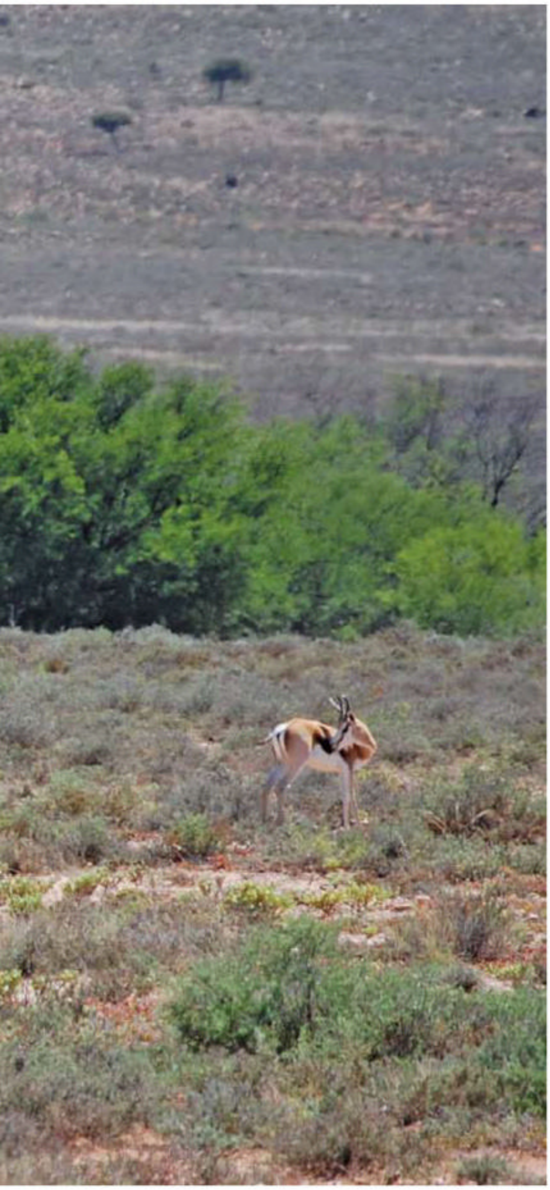
Green mentions the big drought of the late 1920s in the Prince Albert district in the Karoo, the worst even the oldest farmer could remember, with only 75mm of rain recorded in 36 months. However, he writes that if those senior citizens could have discussed this view with their great-grandparents, they would simply have heard the same old story about previous droughts being so severe.

Still, during the big drought, farmers had to leave their farms to find work on the roads at half-a-crown a day. Old men who had owned cars before the drought now had to sweat under an unforgiving sun for a plate of food. Schoolchildren

fainted from hunger, and the veld was covered in the skeletons of livestock.

But according to Green, history does not support the notion, which surfaces during every drought, that the country has become drier than ever before. Apparently, Jan van Riebeeck often complained about the long dry seasons in the Cape. On the day he landed, in fact, he was shocked by the cracks in the ground and the dry riverbeds.

Early travellers regularly mentioned drought. In 1711–12, the authorities struggled to collect taxes as a result of a drought. In April 1786, the Berg River stopped flowing. In 1803, half of the cattle in the Roggeveld perished, and this where there had been abundant water 50 years earlier from weekly thunderstorms.



BELOW: The ideal has always been for farmers to produce livestock and grow crops in harmony with nature.
PHOTOS: ROELOF BEZUIDENHOUT

A Dr Andrew Smith observed the disappearance of hippos from the Kuruman River, and a certain Anderson complained that the Namaquas were getting less rain than 25 years earlier.

THE 1920s DROUGHT IN THE PRINCE ALBERT DISTRICT IS THE WORST EVEN THE OLDEST FARMER CAN REMEMBER

The major recorded droughts during those times occurred in 1816, from 1827 to 1832, in 1846, from 1858 to 1866, and then again in 1883. The years between 1858 and 1866 were possibly the worst since the days of Van Riebeeck. The years 1904 and 1905 were also a nightmare, as was 1919.

Green writes: "Long ago, the famous meteorologist Dr JR Sutton of Kimberley pointed out that South Africa lies in the southern, anticyclone belt, which stretches around the globe and experiences high pressure and few clouds. One could therefore expect sharp sunlight and droughts outside the eastern coastal areas such as at Durban, and [in the] high mountains. A similar belt in the Northern Hemisphere houses the hot deserts. At the time it was believed that conditions in the Antarctic influenced our climate.

"When the rains eventually come, no one complains that the country is drying up. In fact, the topsoil washes away and dams break, as during the 1869 flood at Beaufort West when tree stumps drifted into town and £60 000 of damage ensued. At one time or another someone will again hear a rain frog or see fish falling from the sky."

CLIMATE CHANGE AND EL NIÑO

What Green would have made of current scientific knowledge and views about rainfall cycles and the role of man's doings in climate change we will never know. But he was aware of research that indicated that the Cape's winter rain could be predicted a year in advance on the basis of air pressure measurements over New Zealand, with an apparent accuracy of 80%. There was also much faith in an 11-year sunspot cycle, together with the theory that Cape Town would get its heaviest downpours within a year of maximum sunspot activity.

Since the late 1960s, droughts in the summer rainfall regions have become associated with El Niño events, so much so that some researchers speculate that the large locust plagues of the past can be correlated with the breaking of droughts.

Since 1921, the disaster droughts have happened in 1926, 1933, 1945, 1949, 1952, 1970, 1983 and 1992. An 18-to-20-year cycle was found in only a number of dry districts, making the much-vaunted cycle theory a bit dicey. However, the total number of wet and dry districts per decade seems to have increased since the 1960s. Drought lasting three years is not uncommon for each of the eight South African rainfall regions defined by the South African Weather Service.

In his book, *The rise of conservation in South Africa: settlers, livestock, and the environment 1770-1950*, William Beinart says the effect of drought on the populace and the economy led to much discussion in the early 1900s about whether South Africa was drying up or not.

Then, in 1920, a certain HS du Toit was appointed chairperson of what was known as the Drought Investigation Commission. Du Toit, who was committed to modernisation and scientific agriculture, painted what he thought was a typical scenario, bearing in mind that sheep farmers were accused of destroying the landscape for the sake of their sheep: a stock farmer has a few good years and makes robust progress, but his farm is heavily stocked. He watches the sky day and night and takes courage from a few thunderclouds, which soon disappear again with the west wind. There is a copper sky for a week or more. Over time, he gains and loses hope for rain until there is no veld or water and the sheep die. In those days, farmers could actually get a rebate on animals that had succumbed to drought.

Even crop farms were overstocked because farmers had to keep several span of oxen to plough their lands.

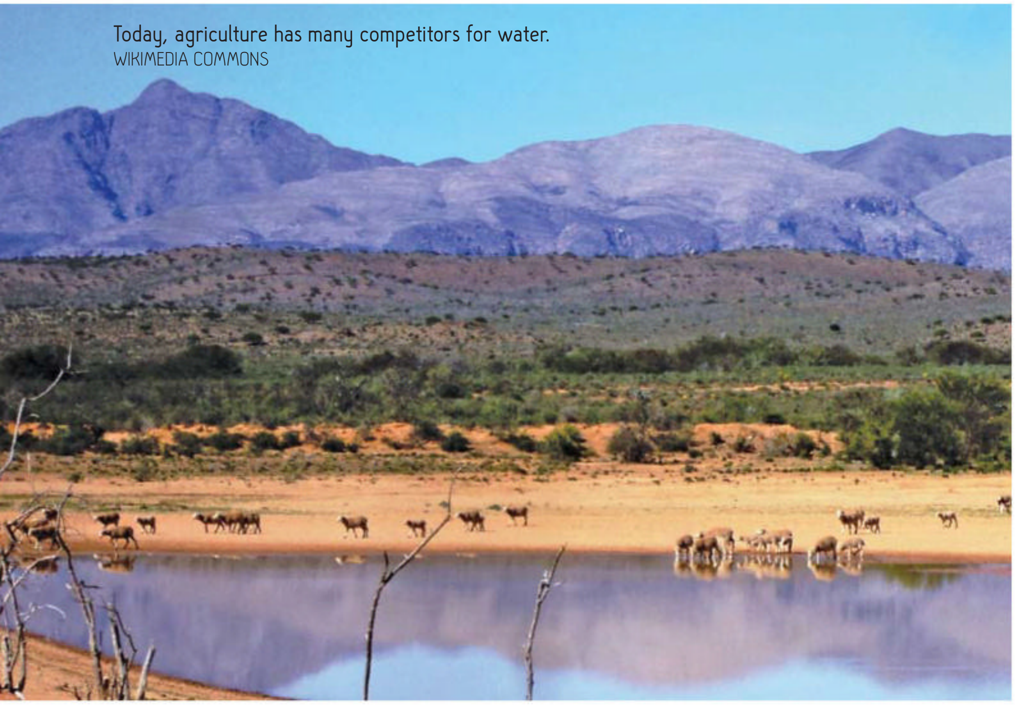
Beinart also writes about travellers in the 1820s finding a desolate interior with its mountain denuded of soil. They often saw houses and farms that had been deserted due to a failure in the supply of water.

As any South African farmer will tell you, the promise of rain is broken all too often.

John Howison, who worked for the East India Company, compared the emaciated countryside to an animal body in which the circulation had ceased from disease and exhaustion.

The idea that farmers cause their own droughts is nothing new, although not even the best farmer can easily survive a full-blown, protracted drought without some support from somewhere.

An attempt along these lines was made via the national grazing strategy, which was linked to the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act of 1983. During the disastrous droughts between 1987 and 1998, the state helped farmers withdraw livestock from the veld. When the rains finally came, there was much debate about whether the improved veld was due to the withdrawal scheme or the good rainfall, although it was probably both. But what a difference rain can make on its own!



Today, agriculture has many competitors for water.
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

EXPERIMENTING WITH FARM SIZE

Before that, the Subdivision of Agricultural Land Act of 1970 had tried to stop land degradation by instituting a so-called economic unit, or minimum size, for a farm in each district. The piece of land had to be large enough for a family to farm in harmony with nature and earn a decent living with available rainfall without destroying their natural resources. However, by the mid-1980s, it had already become clear that the cost-price squeeze and inflation was putting so much pressure on these units that what was big enough for 1970 simply wasn't big enough anymore.

Today, of course, urbanisation and industry are in direct competition with agriculture for clean water, so farmers are not alone in their battles with drought.

Everyone will increasingly depend on accurate medium- to long-range weather forecasts, and hope that technologies such as desalination, recycling and groundwater recharge will soon make a difference.

Email Roelof Bezuidenhout at farmersweekly.co.za. Subject line: Droughts. **FW**

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14 JULY 2023

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Four-star beach hotel surrounded by pristine natural beauty

Sunrises over the ocean are spectacular in Arniston, which is close to Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of Africa. PHOTOS: BRIAN BERKMAN

Brian Berkman visits the seafront Arniston Spa Hotel, enjoys a room with a sea view, and chats to a veteran Elgin farmer about fishing.

There is something special and reassuringly old-fashioned about the Arniston Spa Hotel. And, by old-fashioned, I'm referring to the level of care and detail, such as a handwritten card each night with the weather forecast and tides. And when you leave and breezily tell the receptionist that you're off to the famous cave, she warns you that the tide will be too high to do so.

The care is also visible in the cuisine, which is a highlight of the stay. Many items are halaal and gluten-free, and low-carbohydrate options are offered as well as dishes for vegans and vegetarians.

As many of the staff come from Kassiesbaai, a nearby fishing village with a Grade 1 listing because of its historical importance, there is also a warm familiarity between them, which filters in a positive way to the guest experience. Kassiesbaai's mostly whitewashed houses are owned by the local Fishermen's Union.

While food at the hotel comes from a central kitchen, there are two eating areas: the elegant dining room and the bistro. The former boasts full-frontal sea views and serves a stellar buffet breakfast and à la carte dinner to hotel guests. The latter offers equally beautiful sea views and is open to the public. It's very popular not only because the food is excellent, but also because there are few other dining options for many kilometres. Despite having no competition, menu prices are reasonable.

fw TRAVEL AWARDS

FARMER'S WEEKLY'S RATING OF THE VENUE

Overall experience:	4/5
Amenities and services:	3/5
Level of customer service:	4/5
Value for money:	5/5

The hotel's guest relations manager, Barbara Burger, says: "There's no doctor, supermarket or mall in Arniston, but we have this four-star country hotel amid pristine natural beauty. The Indian Ocean is on our doorstep and you can swim safely at surrounding beaches."

Burger has a background in agriculture and enjoys sharing netball and rugby stories.

Elgin's veteran farmer from Oak Valley Estate, Anthony Rawbone-Viljoen, tells *Farmer's Weekly* that he has always been taken by Arniston and its surrounding coastline. He extols its "uncorrupted natural beauty, relatively free from human development, with outstanding marine and shore life, and a stunning dune system that mesmerises the senses with its different hues, especially at sunset".

"If you're a fisherman, either from the shore and off a boat, Arniston is the place to be. With its warm Indian Ocean influences and turquoise sea, it's the ideal destination, driven by the abundance of the local fishery."

Arniston was named after the troop carrier *Arniston* that was shipwrecked there on 30 May 1815. The town is also known as Waenhuiskrans on account of the seaside cave, which is vast enough to accommodate a wagon and a span of oxen.

ABUNDUNCE OF SEA LIFE

Burger says that because the hotel is right on the ocean, it is blessed with an abundance of sea life and fresh seafood from fishing boats.

"We support sustainability by buying line-caught fish and oysters from the local fishermen, and meat from our butcher, who gets his livestock from local farms. This means short travel distances, and we get fresh vegetables from a greengrocer in Bredasdorp, about 25km away."

Rawbone-Viljoen remembers Jock Dichmont, one of the hotel's previous owners. "His stories of the sea were captivating. He was a spear-fisherman of great note and was fearless. If a shark appeared near the boat, he would jump overboard to identify the species.

"He had a gentle side to him as well. When, at the age of 13, I was ill with chronic asthma in the Volkshospitaal in Cape Town, he arrived unexpectedly with a projector and showed me his amazing collection of underwater slides of the fish he had photographed in Mozambique. I've never forgotten his generosity to a sick young boy who happened to share his great love for the sea."

'THE OCEAN IS ON OUR DOORSTEP, AND YOU CAN SWIM SAFELY AT THE NEARBY BEACHES'

Since 2003, the hotel has been owned by Robert Haarburger, Drew Danford and Mario Mirabitur. It is a member of Cape Country Routes and is a two-hour drive from Cape Town through the hills of the Overberg. The 67 en-suite rooms offer every comfort and have either a sea or pool view. Some rooms have fireplaces, and the deluxe sea-facing rooms have private balconies with 180° ocean views.

Room 100 has the benefit of an L-shaped balcony with front and side views and a bathtub with a view when the white timber shutters between the bedroom and the bathroom are opened.

The coffee and tea station in the room includes quality ground coffee and a plunger, as well as sachets for making hot chocolate. The rooms are serviced daily, which includes an evening turndown service where the tea and coffee supplies are replenished. This is akin to a five-star hotel experience. There is a complimentary bottle of sherry in the room to enjoy in the sitting area while gazing at the sea.

The hotel's spa, which is on the second floor, is run by the Ginkgo Spa and Wellness Group. Treatments focus on traditional touch relaxation therapies. The spa also has two saunas and a rasul steam chamber, and use of the sauna is included in booked treatments.

Waenhuiskrans cave in Arniston is an impressive sight and well worth visiting.

VALUE FOR MONEY

For what you get, this hotel delivers excellent value for money. Luxury sea-facing rooms are R1 630 per night for two people while pool-facing rooms are R1 320. The hotel offers a kids' club during school holidays.

A drawback is that Wi-Fi, while free of charge, can only be accessed with one-gig vouchers, and a different one is needed for each device. Today's travellers regard Wi-Fi as no different to hot water: it should be included in the room price and be available at all times.

Although access to Waenhuiskrans cave is only possible at low-water tide, it is still worthwhile walking there from Roman Beach. While most of the route can be managed easily, there are many stone steps down to the beach and rock-hopping is required. To enter the cave, you have to first go through a smallish space, bending down to reach it. Non-slip shoes that you don't mind getting wet are recommended.

Phone 028 445 9000, or email reservations@arnistonhotel.com. Visit arnistonhotel.com. **FW**

A view of Arniston's turquoise sea can be enjoyed from the bedroom.

THE HITCHING POST

I am looking for an active guy in his late 60s or 70s with a sense of humour. He must be kind and an animal lover. Are you tired of not having a significant other to chat with, and spending winter nights on your own? Well, I am! I'm a widow and live in Cape Town, so hopefully will hear from somebody close.
LONELY GIRL

I am looking for a single white guy who is at least 55 years old and has lost a child, so that he can understand me. He must be a practising Christian, a non-smoker and a non-drinker.
SOLE SURVIVOR

I am a 56-year-old Caucasian lady with brown eyes and short brown hair. I am petite, exercise regularly, a non-smoker, and not religious. I grew up on a horse-breeding farm in (then) Rhodesia and moved to a smallholding in Honeydew. I am divorced and have no children. I love the outdoors, ocean and mountains.

TENTATIVE66

I am a white, 63-year-old, young-at-heart widow. I love country life, beach walks, fireplaces, cooking, travel and watching cricket and rugby. I am down to earth and friendly. Looking for a white companion and friend. He must be tall, fit, honest and kind.
COUNTRY GIRL

I am a 96-year-old lady, looking for a friend to meet for the odd cup of tea or toasted sandwich. I am a bit deaf and a bit blind (but not that bad) and I walk with a stick. I live in Howick. Way back I was in the navy. I am British, with the sense of humour to go with it.
ANY TAKERS

I am a 77-year-old Coloured widow, a retired teacher and independent. I am hoping for a male friend of sober habits. I don't drink or smoke. Enjoy reading, writing letters, sewing, knitting and laughing. Looking for someone with a sense of humour. I have two grown-up children. I belong to a Methodist church.
SING A SONG, 5850

I am a 68-year-old white woman who lives in Cape Town, looking for a travel buddy. I would like to go to game reserves and other camping spots, but I'm a newbie and need someone with camping equipment to go with me, share expenses and show me the ropes. Non-smokers, please.
REBA

HOW TO PLACE A POST: The service is free, confidential and open to those over 18. Posts or replies cannot be written on behalf of someone else, and you must supply a pseudonym. Posts must not exceed 50 words and your address must be legible. Sign with your name and surname. Send your post to Hitching Post, PO Box 1797, Pinegowrie 2123 or email hitchingpost@caxton.co.za.

HOW TO REPLY TO A POST: Send a response in a sealed, SA-stamped envelope and write the pseudonym of the person to whom it should be sent on the front cover in pen. Place this into a second SA-stamped envelope and send it to Hitching Post, PO Box 1797, Pinegowrie 2123.

On The Edge

Connectivity: the agri game-changer

Without research and game-changing improvements in technology, the agriculture sector would have suffered even more losses due to climate change. Researchers are now looking to make the most of data and connectivity to increase efficiency and ensure farming remains sustainable.

According to research by the McKinsey Center for Advanced Connectivity and the McKinsey Global Institute, the advancement could contribute greatly to the global GDP. The current use of connectivity in agriculture involves farmers using data consulting with regards to soil, crops, livestock and weather. However, the challenge is to enable access to advanced tools that could turn this data into action.

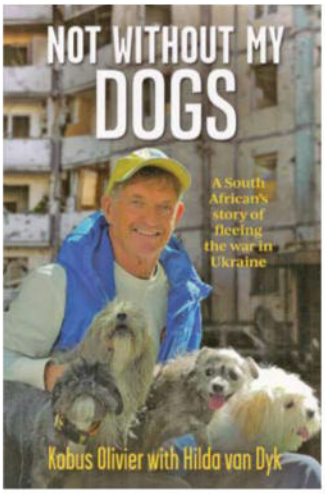
The institute's research shows that 3G and 4G networks are, in most cases, sufficient to enable advanced monitoring of crops and livestock. The McKinsey Center, however, added that simple tools might be just the start to unlock the potential value that connectivity held for agriculture. Infrastructure must be developed to use this technology in agriculture. "By 2030, we expect advanced connectivity infrastructure of some type to cover roughly 80% of the world's rural areas; the notable exception is Africa, where only a quarter of its area will be covered," said the institute.

Drones are also currently making a huge difference in the industry. The institute said advanced connectivity thanks to drone technology would put farmers in the driving seat once again. According to the institute, by the end of this decade, the use of this technology could add more than $500 billion (R9,4 trillion) to the global economy.

Read the original article at shorturl.at/cpB06. **FW**

From the heat of battle to the icy Antarctic

Patricia McCracken reviews the adventures of an expat in Ukraine, a retelling of Shackleton's legendary rescue mission, a chilling novel of monks on the Skelligs off the coast of Ireland, and a gripping legal thriller.


NOT WITHOUT MY
DOGS
A South African's story of fleeing the war in Ukraine
Kobus Olivier with Hilda van Dyk

Not Without My Dogs *by Kobus Olivier with Hilda van Dyk (Tafelberg, R280)*

After various travels, Capetonian cricketer-turned-coach and school teacher Olivier falls in love with the beauty of Kyiv in Ukraine. In June 2018, he moves there with his wheelchair-bound father and his dog.

Before long, puppies are born, Olivier's father dies, and this bittersweet time is swept away by the war, with its bombs, wrecked buildings, dead bodies – and the reality that Olivier cannot flee on public transport with his four dogs.

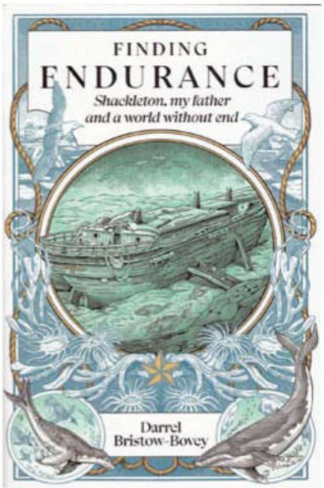
After a friend of a friend eventually ferries him and the dogs out of the city, Olivier realises that he's doubly displaced – from his forever home and from the refugees' ranks because he's not a Ukrainian citizen. He and the dogs trek from place to place and through one country after another.

You may have seen some of the news coverage of Olivier's story, but here's the whole thing in one volume, written with engaging directness by Van Dyk.

Finding Endurance: Shackleton, my father and a world without end *by Darrel Bristow-Bovey (Jonathan Ball, R280)*

Ernest Shackleton was an Antarctic explorer in the classic tradition: larger than life, eccentric and fearless.

Many books have been written about him and his epic adventure, and Bristow-Bovey has been entranced by the story since hearing it from his father as a child.

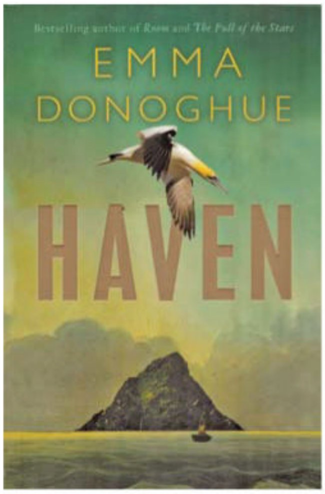


How in 1915, on the 'Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition', Shackleton's ship, *The Endurance*, was crushed by pack-ice and sank, leaving Shackleton and his men stranded thousands of kilometres from civilisation. And how Shackleton took to an open boat and crossed 1 200km of dangerous seas to get help for his stranded men.

That story and more are here in a lively narrative form, but cleverly interwoven with Bristow-Bovey's own adventures and his thoughts on how the frozen south influenced his life story. Imaginatively structured and lyrically narrated.

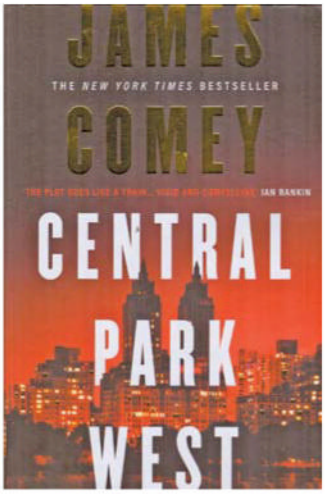
Haven *by Emma Donoghue (Picador, R340)*

Artt, a devout monk, has a dream telling him to forsake all worldly temptations and bring Trian and Cormac to answer the call with him. The first sign of Artt's obsessive plan comes when most of the expedition's provisions and equipment are abandoned before they set off down Ireland's longest river, the Shannon. They emerge into the Atlantic beyond the reach of the maps and charts of the time.



Eventually, they spot the Skelligs, two small, rocky, uninhabited islands with no streams and no animals. They now face the challenge of surviving here with almost no provisions. Artt becomes obsessed with his mission's purity rather than practicality, while the other two become increasingly afraid of the fate that seems to await them.

Set on a real island off Ireland's County Kerry, a UNESCO World Heritage site because of its early Christian monastery, this is a chilling and well-evoked depiction of fanatical faith.



Central Park West *by James Comey (Head of Zeus, R520)*

Comey climbed the ladder of US federal law enforcement until he reached the top – director of the FBI – in 2013. Then, four years later, President Donald Trump fired him. Since then, Comey has written two non-fiction reflections on truth and leadership, with now, his first novel.

A courtroom drama, it opens with a dead former governor's murder set up as a suicide and the finger pointing at his ex-wife. But this governor had ties to the Mafia, so federal prosecutor Nora Carleton and colleagues are struggling to make their case. A high-ranked Mafia man, a young woman with a liking for carrying out hits, and a charming French Mafia hanger-on are all in their sights, but trying to lock up slippery mobsters is a challenge.

Cleverly structured with fascinating federal law background elegantly woven in, this is an enjoyable weekend read.

Patricia McCracken is a features and investigative journalist. **FW**

Auction Sales

TO PLACE AN UPCOMING AUCTION EVENT in the Classifieds Auctions section, contact René Moonsamy on 010 971 3771 or at renea@caxton.co.za, or Natasha Kock on 010 971 3770 or at natashakock@caxton.co.za.

TO LIST AUCTION RESULTS in this section, email Janine Ryan at janiner@caxton.co.za.

Market Report

28 June 2023	Price
Beef	
Weaner calves < 200kg	R31,35/kg
Weaner calves 200kg - 250kg	R30/kg
Weaner calves > 250kg	R28,32/kg
A-class	R26,80/kg
B-class	Unavailable
C-class cows (fat)	R22,80/kg
C-class cows (thin)	R18,56/kg
Slaughter bulls	R26,18/kg
Mutton and lamb	
Feeder lambs > 30kg	R41,24/kg
Slaughter lambs	R40,50/kg
Feeder ewes	R38,10/kg
Fat ewes	R33,75/kg
Goats	
Lambs	R53,87/kg
Ewes	R44,75/kg

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National Braford Sale

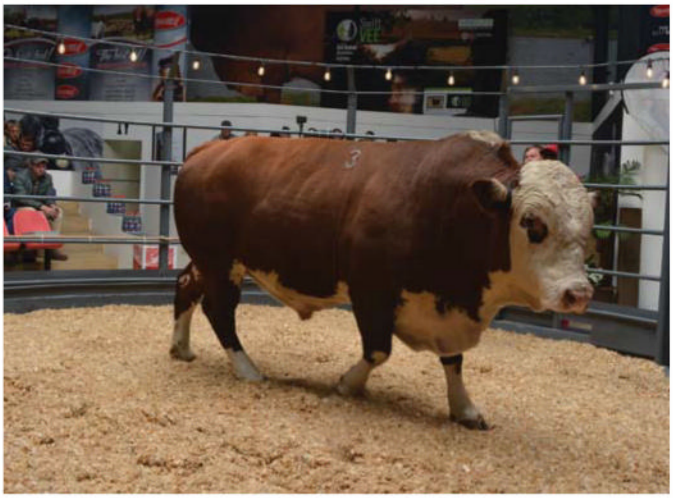
HIGHEST: (BULL) R170 000

Davel – The National Braford Sale was held at The Bull Ring on 14 June.

The highest price of the day was paid for the bull GM 19 100, which was sold by Bonheur Brafords in Bethal to Nico Pieterse of Nicjac Pieterse Farm in Bethal for R170 000. Bulls achieved an average price of R74 047,62.

In-calf heifers achieved an average price of R25 842,11, while 3-in-1 cows were sold for an average of R30 000. Cows with calves were sold for an average price of R27 000, while commercial open heifers averaged R9 000.

The sale was held by Vleissentraal, with PM Swart as the auctioneer. – *Staff reporter*



The bull GM 100 sold for the highest price of R170 000. VLEISSENTRAAL/FACEBOOK

Hilltop SA Mutton Merino Production Sale

HIGHEST: (RAM) R255 000

Heilbron – The Hilltop SA Mutton Merino Production Sale was held at the Heilbron Golf Club on 27 June. A new South African record was set when a ram achieved the highest price of R255 000 when he was sold to Benjamin Boerdery in Heilbron. Rams achieved an average price of R19 480.

In-lamb ewes achieved an average price of R5 955, while ewes with lambs were sold for an average price of R5 184. Open ewes sold for an average of R3 225, while in-lamb (with multiples) ewes achieved an average of R4 925. In-lamb (with singles) ewes achieved an average price of R3 800, and young open ewes averaged R2 856.

The sale was held by BKB, with Jan Mostert as the auctioneer. – *Staff reporter*

The highest-priced ram, which sold for R255 000, with (back, from left): Koos Engelbrecht (buyer), Lisa Boshoff (flock manager), Kobus Engelbrecht (buyer), Danie de Wet (BKB), Jan Mostert (auctioneer) and JD Steyn (BKB). Front: Jan-Hendrik Claasen (left, BKB) and Faans Pretorius (seller). BKB/FACEBOOK

World and SA National Boer Goat and Kalahari Red Goat Production Sale

HIGHEST: (RAM) R120 000

Bloemfontein – The World and SA National Boer Goat and Kalahari Red Goat Production Sale was held at the Bloemfontein Showgrounds on 5 May.

The highest price of the day was paid for a Boer goat ram, which was sold by Lukas Burger of Griekwastad on behalf of Riekie de Witt to CVS Boerdery Exports in Montana Park on behalf of Abdulaziz Mulla Youssuf of Kuwait for R120 000. Boer goat rams achieved an average price of R52 133,33.

The highest-priced Kalahari Red ewe and ram were sold by Josef Kleynhans of Ellisras to Abdulla Alammar of Saudia Arabia for R60 000 and R80 000 respectively. Kalahari Red rams were sold for an average price of R53 500.

Boer goat ewes were sold for an average price of R30 521,74, while Kalahari Red ewes achieved an average of R46 833,33.

The sale was held by BKB, with Danie Strauss as the auctioneer. – *Gavin Isted*

The highest-priced Kalahari Red ewe (left), which was sold for R60 000, and the highest-priced Kalahari Red ram, which was sold for R80 000, with (from left): Danie Strauss (auctioneer), Randel Massingue (handler), Josef Kleynhans (seller), Abdulla Alammar (buyer) and Zamuxolo Gqoloza (handler).

The highest-priced ram, which sold for R120 000, with (from left): JP Swart (SwiftVee), Corné van Staden of CVS Boerdery Exports for Abdulaziz Mulla Youssuf (buyer), Lukas Burger of Griekwastad (on behalf of buyer Riekie de Witt), Danie Strauss (auctioneer), and Kabous van Schalkwyk (SwiftVee).

The highest-priced Boer goat ewe, which sold for R55 000, with (from left): Danie Strauss (auctioneer), Braam Maritz (seller), Hein Booysen (on behalf of buyer Milamiek Boerdery) and his son HJ of Kuruman.

PHOTOS: GAVIN ISTED

SA Ile De France Stud Breeders' Association National SA Elite Sale

Bloemfontein – The SA Ile De France Stud Breeders' Association National SA Elite Ram and Ewe Sale was held at the Bloemfontein Showgrounds on 29 April.

The highest price of the day was paid for a ram, which was sold by Paul Jordaan of Grootvlakte in Somerset East to Jason Davel of the Donkerberg Elite Ile de France Stud in Reitz, Howard Hobson of the Pinnacle Stud in Ladybrand and Henning van Tonder of Henlin Stoetery in Reitz for R62 500. Rams achieved an average price of R23 333,33.

Ewes were sold for an average price of R10 428,57, while in-lamb ewes achieved an average of R12 571,43. Ewes with lambs were sold for an average of R21 000.

The sale was held by BKB, with Jan Mostert as the auctioneer. – *Gavin Isted*

The highest-priced ram, which sold for R62 500, with (back, from left): Jason Davel and Howard Hobson (buyers), Jan Mostert (auctioneer), Paul Jordaan (seller), Henning van Tonder (buyer) and Wiben (buyer's son) and Ilna (buyer's daughter) van Tonder. Front: Joshua Moroengane (handler). GAVIN ISTED

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COMPLETE INFORMATION AND PAMPHLET AVAILABLE AT: WWW.BKB.CO.ZA

ROUTE: From N4: Drive on the R35 direction Bethal for 13 km, turn left on the gravel road at the Driefontein road sign. Drive 6.5 km around the open pit mine and turn left. Drive for 2 km and turn left at the T-junction. Drive 800 m up to the second entrance's office and the auction site. **From Bethal:** Take the R35 direction Middelburg for 52 km. Turn right at SIS yellow board. Drive 3 km, turn left at T-junction. Drive 1 km, turn right. Drive 2 km, turn left at T-junction. Drive 800 m until you reach the auction site on your right hand side.

ENQUIRIES: David Harris 082 573 7979. Moolman Mentz 083 229 2500. BKB, Ermelo: 017 811 2027.
Auctioneer: Billy Lyons 082 785 5498. For complete information visit our web pages : **www.bkb.co.za**

VREDE AUCTION GPS: S27°30.065' E29°07.941'

CHARFONTEIN

DOHNE MERINO STUD
www.charfontein.co.za
14TH PRODUCTION AUCTION

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023 | 11H00 | HUMANIA, VREDE

OFFER 515 DOHNE MERINO'S

- 65 A & AA RAMS OF WHICH - 10 TRIED AA RAMS
  - 15 HERS RAMS (OFFERED IN GROUPS OF THREE)
- 150 HERD EWES (2 TOOTH; OPEN; 4 MONTHS WOOL)
- 300 PREGNANT HERD EWES (LAMB 5/09/2023; 4 MONTHS WOOL)

77 years of devoted breeding
Charfontein -Dohnes
Est 1947

VIEWING CAN BE ARRANGED BY APPOINTMENT

ENQUIRIES: Andries Greyling 082 496 1523. E-mail: charfontein@lantic.net. Jandré Moll 082 307 9169. Sheep - & Wool Officers: Daan Cronjé 082 565 6924 & Pieter Nel 076 078 9849. Auctioneer: Jan Mostert 083 306 8408. For more information visit : **www.bkb.co.za**

BKB

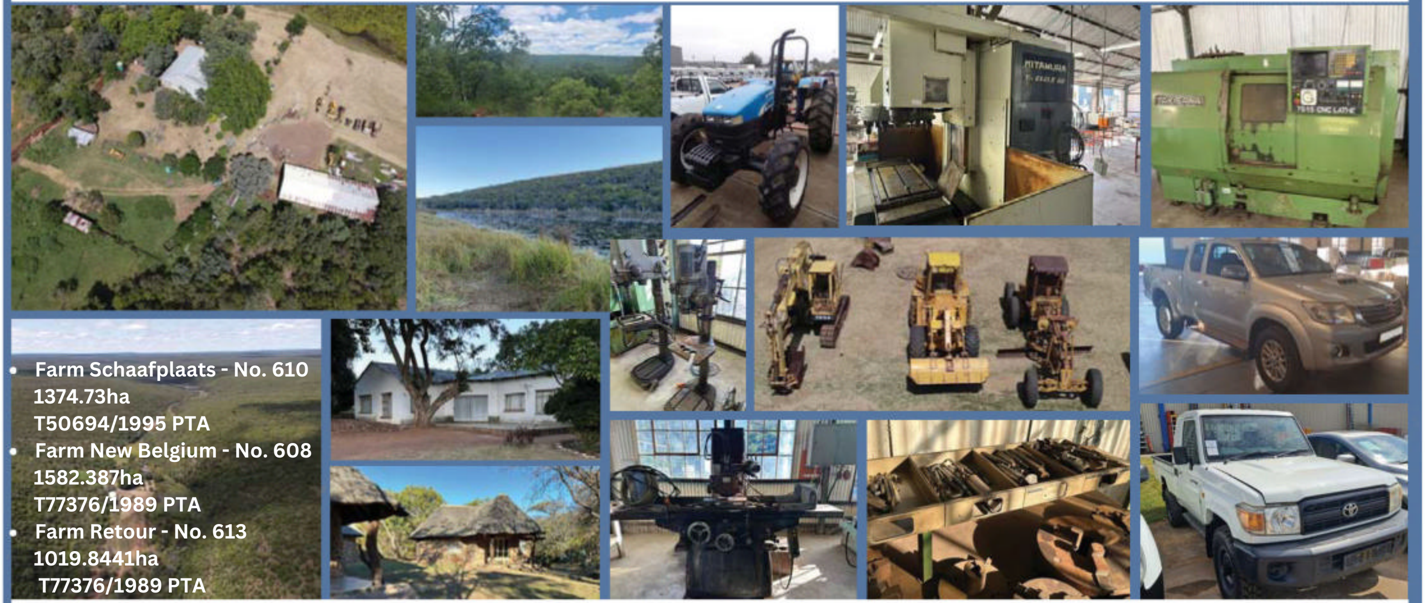
3975ha Pristine Game Farm nestled in the Waterberg

With Full Engineering Workshop, CNC and Woodwork Machines. Fully Furnished Main House.
3 Stone Chalets with 2 Bedrooms and Kitchen

DULY INSTRUCTED BY THE EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF THE LATE A.F. TOLNAI

LIVE AND ONLINE AUCTION TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY 15 JULY 2023 @ 10H00

AT FARM NEW BELGIUM 23°54'46.4"S 28°00'26.0"E VIEWING: FRIDAY 14 JULY 2023 FROM 9H00 – 16H00



- Farm Schaafplaats - No. 610
  1374.73ha
  T50694/1995 PTA
- Farm New Belgium - No. 608
  1582.387ha
  T77376/1989 PTA
- Farm Retour - No. 613
  1019.8441ha
  T77376/1989 PTA

UNRESERVED LOOSE ASSETS:

TRUCKS, TRACTORS, BAKKIES, LANDCRUISER, TRAILERS, EARTHMOVING EQUIPMENT, FARMING EQUIPMENT, CNC MACHINES, WOODWORK MACHINES, ASSORTED TOOLS AND STEEL, COLDROOM PANELS AND MUCH MORE.

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info@africorauctioneers.co.za
www.africorauctioneers.co.za

FARM ACCESS PREFERABLY IN A 4X4 VEHICLE

LOOSE ASSETS TERMS & CONDITIONS:
R 10 000.00 REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT. 10 % COMMISSION AND VAT APPLIES.

PROPERTY TERMS & CONDITIONS:
10% DEPOSIT PAYABLE ON CLOSING BID AMOUNT. 8% COMMISSION ON CLOSING BID AMOUNT. GUARANTEES AFTER 30 DAYS.
FICA REQUIREMENTS APPLY.
TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.

WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2023 AT 11:00 AM - ON SITE

At: Ptn 3 of Farm Makhunda, Malelane area
Co-ordinates for auction: -25.5889271, 31.6503001

A uction
R evolution
I nternational
Detail to excellence

SUGARCANE / LITCHI FARM - 240 HA - MALELANE

www.ariauctions.co.za

PORTION 3 OF THE FARM MAKHUNDA 603 JU MPUMALANGA - EXTENT: 240.7218 HECTARE

±50.7 ha sugarcane, ±27.9 ha Litchi orchards ±12 years (micro) & 75.4 ha available for seasonal crops. 20 ha water rights from Lomati River Irrigation Board (170,000m³). 3 Earth dams, 10 equipped boreholes, various phase 3 Eskom transformers. 3 Bedroom 2 bathroom house, garage, laundry, farm store. Directions: From Malelane, take N4 to Komatipoort, take Jeppes Reef fly-over, travel ±12.3km. Turn left at Tonga/Kamhluswa sign, follow road for ±7.8km. Entrance to farm on right side. Co-ordinates to farm: -25.5889271, 31.6503001

Viewing day FRIDAY 14 JULY 2023 FROM 10H00 - 15H00

R50 000 Refundable registration deposit payable.

Conditions of sale & Auction rules ito CPA act
available on website: www.ariauctions.co.za
Bidders bring copy of ID & proof of residence

Terms: 10% deposit plus 5% Commission on fall of hammer

Contact: Sam Segopane: 074 622 3202
Or 087 237 9750 / 083 415 7738
Email: sibongile@ariauctions.co.za

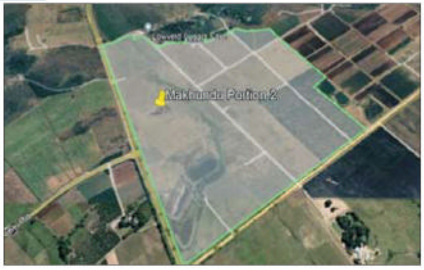
WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2023 AT 11:00 AM - ON SITE

At: Ptn 3 Farm Makhunda. Co-ordinates for auction:
-25.5889271, 31.6503001

A uction
R evolution
I nternational
Detail to excellence

SUGARCANE & MANGO FARM -MALELANE - 113 HA

www.ariauctions.co.za



PORTION 2 OF THE FARM MAKHUNDA 603, REGISTRATION DIVISION JU MPUMALANGA - EXTENT: 113.2408 HECTARE

±76 ha Sugarcane and ±14 ha Mango orchards,18 years, drip & micro. 79.9 ha water rights from Lomati River Irrigation Board (679.150m³). Three earth dams (66.250m³ storage volume). Phase 3 Eskom electricity. Directions: From Malelane, take N4 to Komatipoort, take Jeppes Reef fly-over, travel 11.5km. Turn left at Tonga/Kamhluswa sign, follow road for 7.8km. Entrance to farm on left. Co-ordinates to farm: -25.5938998, 31.6593163.

Viewing day: FRIDAY 14 JULY 2023 from 10h00 to 15h00

R50 000 Refundable registration deposit payable.

Conditions of sale & Auction rules ito CPA act
available on website: www.ariauctions.co.za
Bidders bring copy of ID & proof of residence

Terms: 10% deposit plus 5% Commission on fall of hammer

Contact: Sam Segopane 074 622 3202
Or 087 237 9750 / 083 415 7738
Email: sibongile@ariauctions.co.za

Bidx1.

27th July Online Auction
Bidding opens at 10am at bidx1.com

Portions of Farm Somersetgift & Camboberg,Misgund, Eastern Cape
Fully operational fruit farm

- Perfectly located in the Langkloof with established orchards and Kiwi-fruit under net
- Total 209.5016 Ha

Opening bid R10 000 000

Ptn 106 of Farm 285 Misgund, Eastern Cape
Large Family Home in Misgund

- Large house with swimming pool
- 4,080 sq. m

Opening bid R200 000

For further information contact: mc.dutoit@bidx1.com | +27211403541

See auction terms & conditions on bidx1.com

BELFAST AUCTION GPS: S25°37'59.01"029°55'48.78"

GELDENHUYS BONSMARAS

TUESDAY, 1 AUGUST 2023 @ 11:00
AT SPITSKOP, BELFAST

-JCV-

Offer:
38 Bulls
60 Cows and
Heifers (in calf)

14TH PRODUCTION SALE

LOT 6
JCV 17-042

Free transport on bulls in 200km radius.

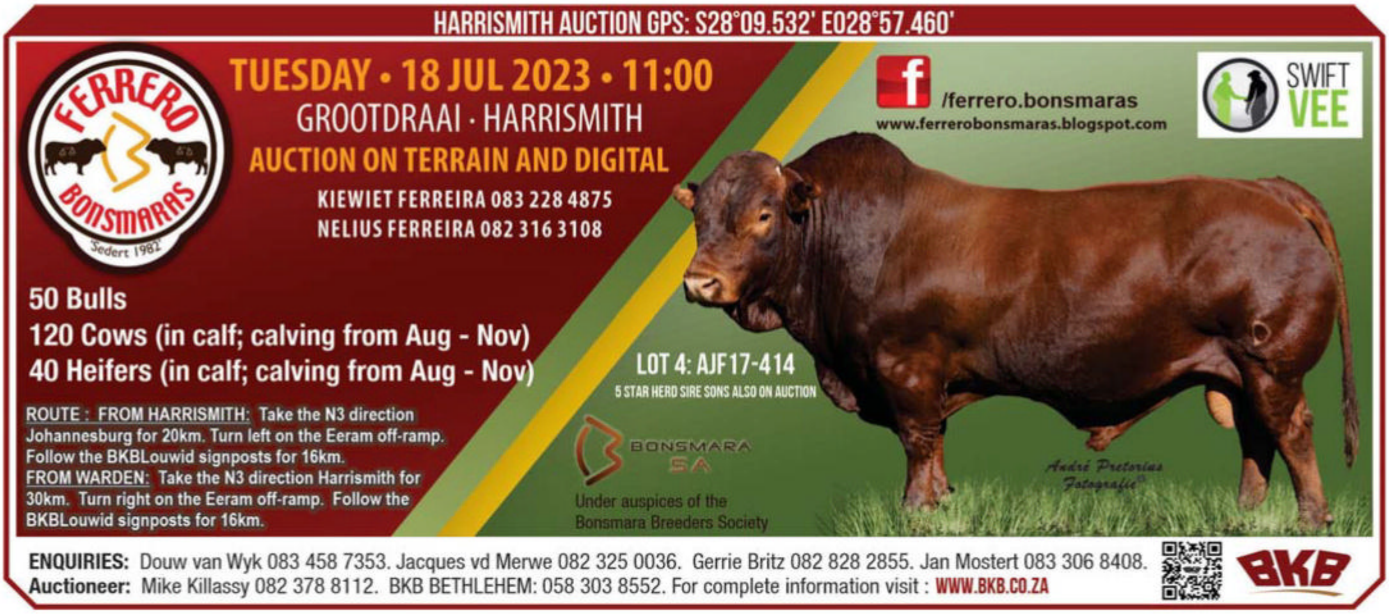
Under the auspices of Bonsmara Cattle Breeders Society.

BONSMARA SA

Johan 072 566 7646 ■ Michiel 072 191 4325 ■ Rocco 082 799 2776

ENQUIRIES: BKB, Ermelo: 017 811 2027. For more information, catalogue and conditions visit our web pages: www.bkb.co.za

BKB



HARRISMITH AUCTION GPS: S28°09.532' E028°57.460'

TUESDAY • 18 JUL 2023 • 11:00

GROOTDRAAI · HARRISMITH

AUCTION ON TERRAIN AND DIGITAL

KIEWIET FERREIRA 083 228 4875
NELIUS FERREIRA 082 316 3108

/ferrero.bonsmaras
www.ferrerobonsmaras.blogspot.com

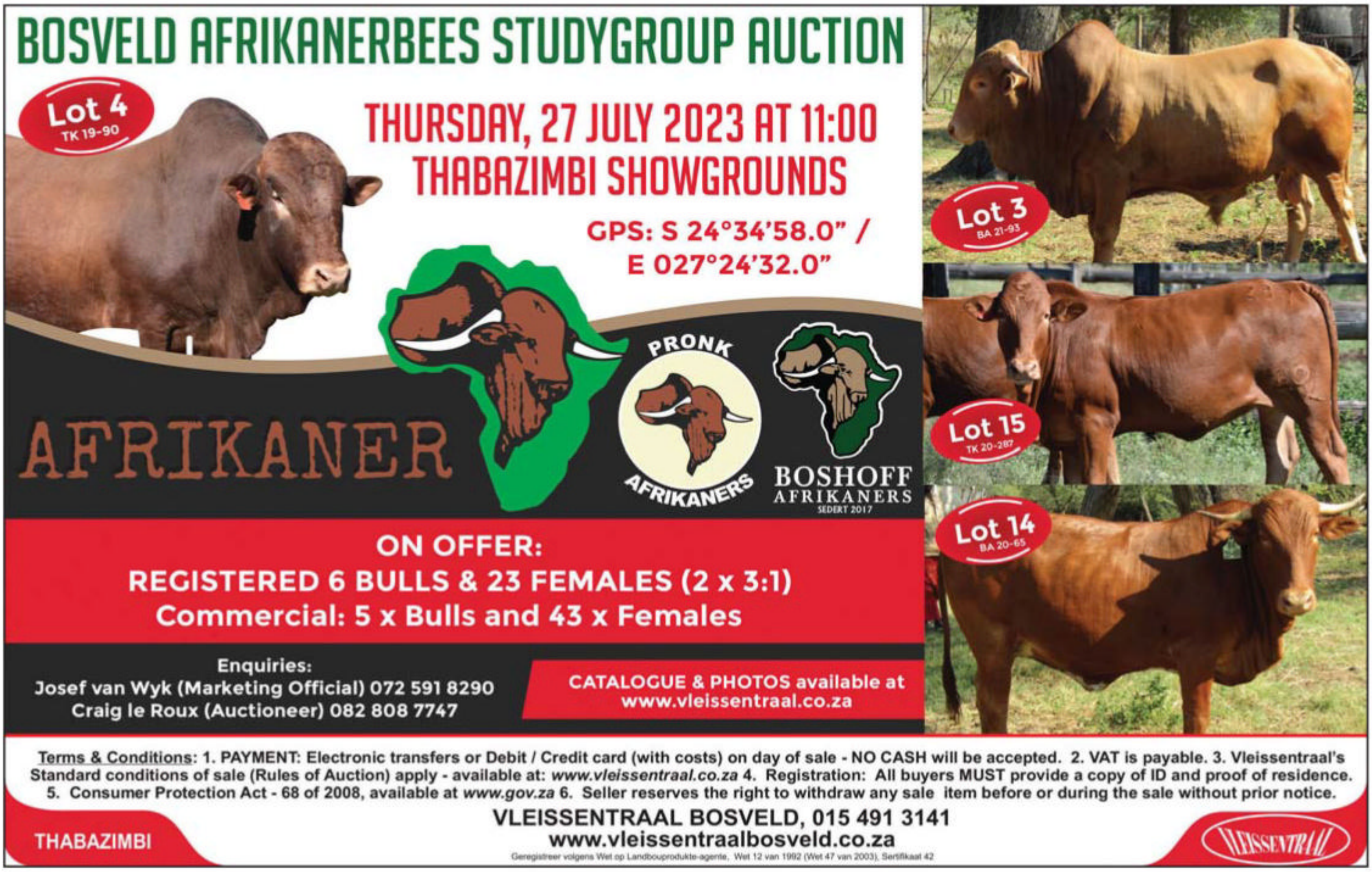
50 Bulls
120 Cows (in calf; calving from Aug - Nov)
40 Heifers (in calf; calving from Aug - Nov)

ROUTE : FROM HARRISMITH: Take the N3 direction Johannesburg for 20km. Turn left on the Eeram off-ramp. Follow the BKBLouwid signposts for 16km.
FROM WARDEN: Take the N3 direction Harrismith for 30km. Turn right on the Eeram off-ramp. Follow the BKBLouwid signposts for 16km.

LOT 4: AJF17-414
5 STAR HERD SIRE SONS ALSO ON AUCTION

Under auspices of the Bonsmara Breeders Society

ENQUIRIES: Douw van Wyk 083 458 7353. Jacques vd Merwe 082 325 0036. Gerrie Britz 082 828 2855. Jan Mostert 083 306 8408.
Auctioneer: Mike Killassy 082 378 8112. BKB BETHLEHEM: 058 303 8552. For complete information visit : WWW.BKB.CO.ZA



BOSVELD AFRIKANERBEES STUDYGROUP AUCTION

THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2023 AT 11:00
THABAZIMBI SHOWGROUNDS

GPS: S 24°34'58.0" /
E 027°24'32.0"

ON OFFER:
REGISTERED 6 BULLS & 23 FEMALES (2 x 3:1)
Commercial: 5 x Bulls and 43 x Females

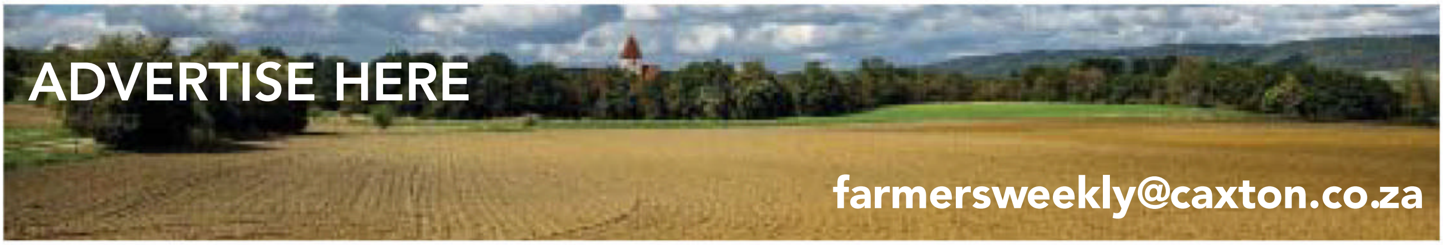
Enquiries:
Josef van Wyk (Marketing Official) 072 591 8290
Craig le Roux (Auctioneer) 082 808 7747

CATALOGUE & PHOTOS available at
www.vleissentraal.co.za

Terms & Conditions: 1. PAYMENT: Electronic transfers or Debit / Credit card (with costs) on day of sale - NO CASH will be accepted. 2. VAT is payable. 3. Vleissentraal's Standard conditions of sale (Rules of Auction) apply - available at: *www.vleissentraal.co.za* 4. Registration: All buyers MUST provide a copy of ID and proof of residence. 5. Consumer Protection Act - 68 of 2008, available at *www.gov.za* 6. Seller reserves the right to withdraw any sale item before or during the sale without prior notice.

THABAZIMBI

VLEISSENTRAAL BOSVELD, 015 491 3141
www.vleissentraalbosveld.co.za
Geregistreer volgens Wet op Landbouprodukte-agente, Wet 12 van 1992 (Wet 47 van 2003), Sertifikaat 42



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farmersweekly@caxton.co.za

GREENDALE
BRANGUS

PRODUCTION SALE

45 RED BRANGUS BULLS & 100 HEIFERS
raised on Heartwater, Redwater & Gallsickness Veld.

FRIDAY
21st JULY
12h00

MOUNT ALICE FARM, WINTERTON, KZN
VIEWING DAY: THURSDAY 20TH JULY @ 3PM
TRANSPORT INCLUDED

Wesley Green: 082 929 6015
Gary Green: 082 292 2314
Auctioneer: Andrew Miller

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9 x 25 x 4	assembly included	R166 000
12 x 25 x 4	assembly included	R211 000
12 x 50 x 4	assembly included	R396 000
15 x 30 x 4.5	assembly included	R281 000
18 x 30 x 4.5	assembly included	R483 000
20x 30 x 6	assembly included	R560 000
20 x 60 x 6	assembly included	R1 034 000
25 x 30 x 6	assembly included	R711 000
25 x 60 x 6	assembly included	R1 305 000
30 x 30 x 6	assembly included	R1 176 000
30m x 60 x 6	assembly included	R 2 151 000

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2 of 12 x 25 x 4	assembly included	R415 000

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Modular housing, delivered within two weeks after ordering. 1, 2, 3, or more bedrooms, with lounge, kitchen and bathroom.

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12 x 25 x 4	R159 000	25 x 30 x 6	R548 000
12 x 50 x 4	R311 000	25 x 60 x 6	R1 060 000
15 x 30 x 4.5	R223 000	30 x 30 x 6	R999 000
18 x 30 x 4.5	R367 000	30 x 60 x 6	R1 927 000

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steve@smstructures.com
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PRINT CONDITIONS

1. Advertisements are only accepted for publication under the following conditions:
   a) The right to withhold any advertisement from publication and to cancel such an advertising order;
   b) No liability is accepted for failure to publish, or for publication dates other than those stipulated by the advertiser, or for any typographical or any other errors of any kind, including loss or damage as a consequence of any of the above;
   c) Omissions of any scheduled insertions by the advertiser shall be considered a breach of the conditions of the order;
   d) Telephonic instructions must always be confirmed in writing.
2. Although all efforts will be made to accommodate the advertiser, acceptance of any advertisement does not guarantee insertion on any specified date or dates.
3. The proprietors reserve the right to edit or revise or reject any advertisement deemed by them to be untruthful or objectionable in subject matter or wording, or unsuitable for any reason, even after acceptance for publication.
4. The proprietors reserve the right to suspend an issue on any day and increase or decrease the usual number of editions without notice.
5. Space is sold to advertisers for the purpose of making announcements concerning their own business and may not be used for attacking or making invidious comparisons with other advertisers, firms, institutions or persons.
6. All approved accounts must be paid within 30 days after the date of insertion, or payment must be made in cash with the advertising order.
7. Advertising orders are accepted subject to editorial space being given.
8. T.C. (till cancelled) orders are guaranteed. Special positions require one month's notice.
9. Orders are accepted for a period not exceeding 12 months from the date of the first insertion, and should the contract amount not be reached within that period, an adjustment of the rate, according to the volume of advertising published, will be made. This also applies when the contract is cancelled prior to completion.
10. If any order of a given amount of advertising is increased during its terms to cover a large contract volume, all of which falls in the original period of 12 months, no reduction in rates shall be rebated for the advertising that has already appeared.
    The lower rate shall apply to advertising appearing after the date of increase.
11. On the announcement of new tariff rates, contract advertisers will be protected at their contract rates for 45 days after the effective date of the new rate, or until expiry of the contract, whichever is earlier. The balance of the order will be subject to the new rate.
12. Acceptance of copy:
    a) If the material is received too late for publication, the space reserved may be charged for.
    b) The right is reserved to refuse material or copy considered objectionable or unsuitable.
13. If proofs are required, copy must be in the printer's hands at least three working days before publication deadline.
14. No cancellations will be accepted after the booking deadline.

ADVERTISEMENT CONDITIONS

1. All prices include VAT.
2. Only recognised abbreviations will be accepted.
3. Advertisements will be categorised according to the first product/service mentioned in the copy.
4. *Farmer's Weekly* accepts no responsibility for quality of goods or services, or for any loss or damage incurred due to incorrect advertisements. It will, however, reprint advertisements free of charge if it is deemed responsible for incorrect copy.
5. *Farmer's Weekly* reserves the right to refuse the placement of an advertisement.
6. Errors and omissions must be reported within the first week of insertion; a reference number must be quoted in all correspondence.
7. Credit applications will be authorised at the discretion of *Farmer's Weekly*, and accounts are strictly 30 days.
8. Non-account holders are required to pay cash up front. Credit will not be given for typographical errors that do not lessen th effectiveness of the advert.
9. Response to the advert is not guaranteed.
10. Advertising agencies do not qualify for any discounts for Classifieds Advertising

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EMAIL: natashakock@caxton.co.za

RENÉ MOONSAMY
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EMAIL: renea@caxton.co.za

CLASSIFIEDS ADVERTISING INDEX

1030 WATER RIGHTS
0810 PRIME PROPERTY
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1020 LEGAL SERVICES
1110 TENDERS
1210 PERSONAL SERVICES
1310 COURSES AND TUITION
1410 SPECIAL SERVICES
1510 EMPLOYMENT WANTED
1610 EMPLOYMENT OFFERED
1710 BUSINESSES FOR SALE
1810 BUSINESSES TO LET
1910 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FARMS FOR SALE

2010: Eastern, Western and Northern Cape; 2020: Free State; 2030: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga; 2040: KwaZulu-Natal; 2050: Namibia; 2060: Other.

FARMS TO LEASE

2110: Eastern, Western and Northern Cape; 2120: Free State; 2130: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga; 2140: KwaZulu-Natal; 2150: Namibia; 2160: Other.

2210 FARMS WANTED
2310 PROPERTY FOR SALE
2410 PROPERTY FOR HIRE

HOLIDAYS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION

2510: Eastern, Western and Northern Cape; 2520: Free State; 2530: Gauteng, Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga; 2540: KwaZulu-Natal; 2550: Namibia; 2560: Other.

LIVESTOCK

2610: Alpacas.

CATTLE

2702: Afrigus; 2704: Afrikaner; 2706: Angus; 2708: Ayrshire; 2710: Beefmaster; 2712: Bonsmara; 2714: Boran; 2716: Bovelder; 2717: Braford; 2718: Brahman; 2720: Brangus; 2722: Braunvieh; 2724: Charolais; 2725: Chianina; 2726: Crossbreed; 2728: Dexter; 2730: Drakenberger; 2732: Gelbvieh; 2734: Guernsey; 2736: Holstein-Friesland; 2738: Hugenoot; 2740: Jersey; 2742: Limousin; 2744: Nguni; 2746: Pinzgauer; 2748: Red Poll; 2749: Wagyu; 2750: Romagnola; 2754: SA Hereford; 2756: Sanganer; 2757: Senepol; 2758: Santa Gertrudis; 2560: Shorthorn; 2762: Simbra; 2764: Simmentaler; 2766: South Devon; 2768: Supertaler; 2770: Sussex; 2772: SA Swiss Dairy; 2774: Tuli; 2776: Other; 2778: Dairy.

2810 SEMEN AND EMBRYOS
2910 DONKEYS
3010 GAME AND HUNTING

GOATS

3110: Angora; 3120: Boer goat; 3130: Kalahari Red; 3140: Dairy; 3150: Savanna; 3160: Other.

HORSES

3210: Thoroughbred; 3220: Riding and show horses; 3230: Draught horses; 3250: Boerperd; 3260: Miniature Horse; 3270: Other.

3310 SADDLES AND OTHER TACK
3410 MULES

PIGS

3510: Berkshire; 3520: Duroc; 3530: Large Black; 3540: Large White; 3550: Kolbroek; 3560: Landrace; 3570: Minnesota; 3575: Other; 3580: Pig equipment.

3610 RABBITS

SHEEP

3704: Afrikaner; 3708: Afrina; 3712: Corriedale; 3716: Damara; 3720: Dormer; 3724: Dorper; 3728: Dorset Horn; 3732: Finnish Landrace; 3736: Ile de France; 3740: Karakul; 3744: Letelle; 3748: Dohne Merino; 3752: Merino; 3756: Merino Landsheep; 3760: Meatmaster; 3762: Nguni; 3764: SA Mutton Merino; 3768 Walrich-Merino; 3772: Pedi; 3776: Persian; 3780: South Down; 3784: Hampshire Down; 3788: Suffolk; 3792: Van Rooy; 3796: Vandor; 3799: Other.

CHICKENS

3802: Point of lay; 3805: Amberlink; 3810: Australorp; 3815: Bantam; 3820: Broilers; 3825: Buff Orpington; 3830: Isa Brown; 3835: Hy-Line; 3840: Leghorn; 3845: Lohmann Brown; 3850: Minorka; 3855: New Hamphire; 3860: Rocket; 3865: Tokai Super Brown; 3870: Game cocks; 3875: White Rock; 3880: Wyandotte; 3885: Crossbreed; 3886: Other.

3910 DUCKS
4010 GEESE
4110 TURKEYS
4210 GAME BIRDS
4310 OSTRICHES
4351 EMU
4410 POULTRY EQUIPMENT
4510 POULTRY FEEDS
4610 LIVESTOCK HANDLING EQUIPMENT
4710 DAIRY EQUIPMENT
4810 SHEARING EQUIPMENT
4910 SLAUGHTERING EQUIPMENT
5010 FEEDS AND SUPPLEMENTS
5110 PIGEONS
5210 BEES
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5410 DOGS
5510 CATS
5605 QUAIL
5610 OTHER ANIMALS
5710 GRAIN CROPS
5810 OILSEED CROPS
5910 FIBRE CROPS
6010 SUGAR CANE
6110 TOBACCO
6210 PASTURES
6310 FRESH PRODUCE
6410 ORCHARDS AND VINES
6510 TREES AND TIMBER
6610 OTHER CROPS
6710 FERTILISER
6810 PESTICIDES
6910 SEEDS
7010 SEEDLINGS
7110 GENERAL FARMING REQUISITES

MACHINERY AND IMPLEMENTS

7204: Applicators; 7208: Compressors; 7210: Combined parts; 7212: Distributors; 7216: Drilling machines; 7220: Earthmoving; 7224: Electrical machines and parts; 7228: Feed mixers; 7232: Fertilisers; 7236: Generators and alternative energy; 7240: Grading machines; 7244: Harvesters and combines; 7248: Haymaking appliances; 7252: Irrigation equipment; 7256: Processing and packaging equipment; 7260: Planters; 7264: Ploughs; 7268: Pumps and boreholes; 7272: Seeders; 7276: Sorting equipment; 7280: Sprayers; 7284: Storage equipment, fridges and freezers; 7288: Tractors and tractor parts; 7292: Weeding appliances; 7296: Welders; 7298: General; 7299: Windmills and parts.

CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING

7310: Building and construction material; 7320: Building equipment and tools; 7330: Concrete and brick equipment; 7340: Dams, storage tanks and reservoirs; 7345: Electricians; 7350: Fences; 7360: Services; 7370: Steel structures; 7380: Tunnels.

VEHICLES AND TRANSPORT

7410: Aircraft; 7420: Bakkies; 7430: Boats and watercraft; 7440: Caravans; 7450: Motorcycles; 7460: Motor vehicles; 7465: Engines; 7470: Used engines; 7480: Spares and accessories; 7490: Trailers; 7495: Other; 7499: Used vehicles.

MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

7510: Agents; 7520: Brokers; 7530: Financing; 7540: Insurance; 7550: Marketing; 7560: Security; 7570: Support systems; 7575: Other.

MISCELLANEOUS

7394: Nursery; 7605: Books; 7610: Camping and caravanning; 7615: Field sports; 7620: Firearms; 7625: Furniture; 7630: Gardening; 7635: Handicrafts; 7640: Hiking and mountaineering; 7645: Music; 7650: Sport; 7655: Swapping; 7660: Travel; 7665: Water sports; 7670: For sale; 7675: Appliances; 7677: Wanted; 7685: Other; 7680: Wanted to buy; 7685: Farm toys; 7692: Pest control.

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TEL: 010 971 3770
EMAIL: natashakock@caxton.co.za

RENÉ MOONSAMY
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2700
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2706
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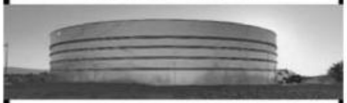

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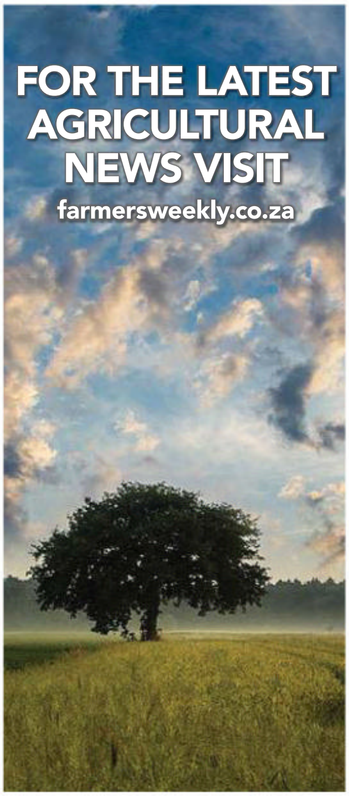

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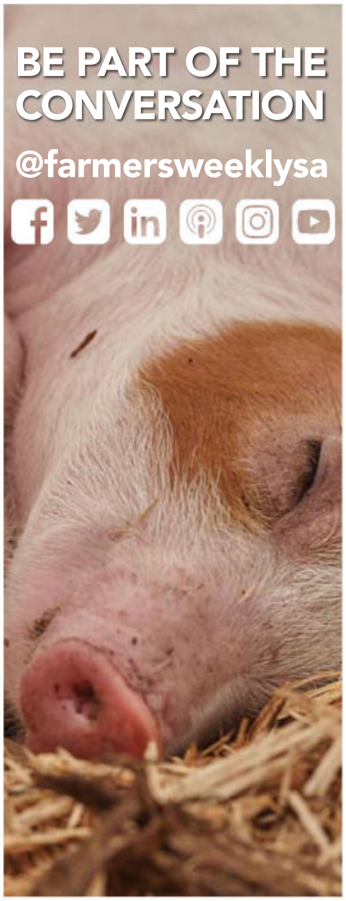

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Ask Our Vet

Protecting parrots against disease

Dear Prof McCrindle,
What are the most common diseases of garden birds, and can they infect my parrot-breeding operation?
Kind regards,
Fanie

Dear Fanie,
A number of diseases of garden birds can affect parrots. Probably the most important are chlamydiosis (also called psittacosis), avian influenza and salmonellosis. These are often brought in by migrating birds in spring.

If you breed parrots, you will, like a poultry farmer, have to prioritise biosecurity.

Treatment for avian diseases varies widely and any sick bird should be taken swiftly to a veterinarian with a special interest in birds. Equally, you should take any bird that has fallen ill and died for an autopsy as soon as possible so that you can take preventive measures to prevent further deaths.

- ***Chlamydiosis***

This is caused by the intracellular bacterium Chlamydia psittaci *and is probably the disease most likely to be transmitted from wild birds to young parrots or other types of psittacine (parrot-like) birds.*
Signs of the disease in an adult parrot are one-eye cold (with a runny discharge and reddened membranes) and green diarrhoea. The bird will also stop eating and sit hunched up with fluffed-out feathers.

Caged birds can catch chlamydiosis from wild pigeons by inhaling dust from their dry droppings, so pigeons perching on breeding cages have a high chance of infecting parrots. Chlamydiosis is also a dangerous zoonosis, potentially leading to fatal pneumonia, and is usually caught through inhaling dust while cleaning parrot cages.

- ***Avian influenza***

This is probably the most important cause of death in garden birds. It is caused by Type A viruses. If young psittacine birds are infected, they will show acute respiratory signs with difficult breathing, stop eating, huddle together and die. Today, Type A influenza also circulates in humans.

- ***Salmonellosis***

This disease, which is caused by Salmonella *spp. bacteria, is commonly transmitted to backyard chickens by wild birds that fly over or bathe in the drinking water. It can also be transmitted to poultry and caged birds from sparrows perching on breeding cages that pollute water and feed containers.*

Commercial egg producers are often forced to 'sparrow-proof' their production cages, as wild birds sharing chicken food with fowls can cause ongoing sporadic deaths in hens.

- ***Colibacillosis***

This disease, which results in acute, often fatal diarrhoea in young psittacine birds, is also transmitted faecally. It is caused by the Escherichia coli *bacterium.*

Other diseases carried by garden birds include aspergillosis (a fungal pneumonia), pasteurellosis, yersiniosis, trichomoniasis, viral papillomatosis and avian pox.
Kind regards,
Prof Cheryl McCrindle

- ***Reference:*** *Kirkwood JK and Macgregor SK. 2000. 'Infectious Diseases of Garden Birds – Minimising the Risks'. Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. shorturl.at/uFQY7.* **FW**

Cheryl McCrindle is an emeritus full professor in the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria, and has extensive experience in animal health. Email her at farmersweekly@caxton.co.za. Subject line: Ask our vet.

Sudoku

MEDIUM

	7				3	5		4
				1				
	9		6	2	4			
						7		
2				6				8
			5		9			6
					1	9		3
		2				1		
4		5		9		8		2

DIFFICULT

6			1	2		9		
		7				2		
	5				3			
	7			4	8		2	
9	1			5			8	
4				6	5			1
	9					7		
						6		

7 JULY

2	6	1	9	8	3	5	7	4
7	9	5	2	4	6	1	3	8
3	4	8	5	7	1	6	9	2
8	5	9	1	6	4	7	2	3
1	3	7	8	9	2	4	6	5
6	2	4	3	5	7	8	1	9
9	7	3	4	1	8	2	5	6
4	1	2	6	3	5	9	8	7
5	8	6	7	2	9	3	4	1

MEDIUM

2	8	7	3	6	5	4	1	9
3	1	5	9	2	4	8	7	6
6	9	4	7	8	1	3	2	5
4	2	8	5	7	6	9	3	1
9	3	6	4	1	8	2	5	7
7	5	1	2	9	3	6	4	8
8	4	2	6	5	7	1	9	3
5	6	9	1	3	2	7	8	4
1	7	3	8	4	9	5	6	2

DIFFICULT

HOW TO PLAY: Fill in the grid so that each row and column, as well as each of the 3 x 3 squares, contains all the digits from 1 to 9.
Look out for the answers to this week's Sudoku puzzles in next week's magazine.

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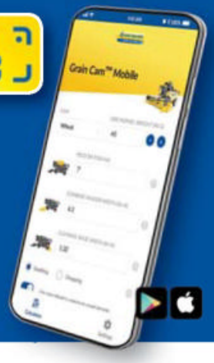

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